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Hana to Yume Comics

Yakumo Tatsu

Volume 1

Itsuki Natsumi

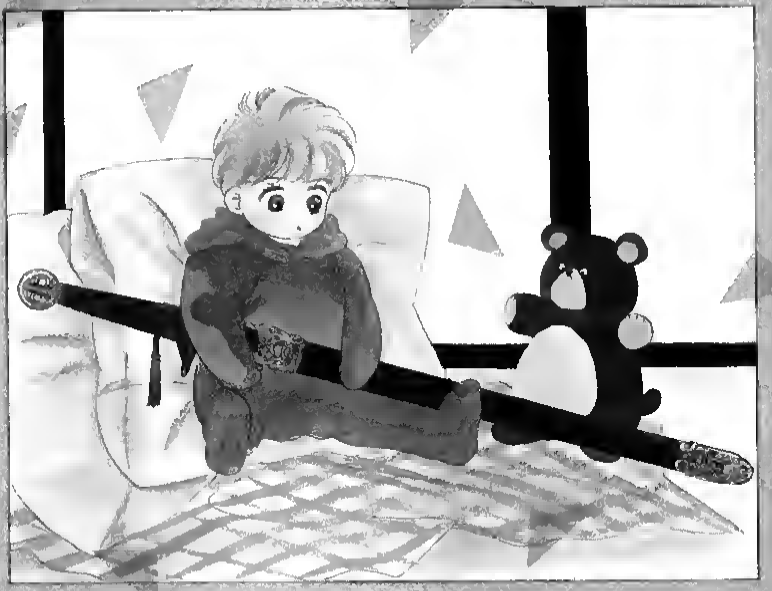
THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. IT HAS ABSOLUTELY NO CONNECTION TO ACTUAL PERSONS, PLACES, OR EVENTS

THE FIRST GODS SUMMONED TWO DIVINE BEINGS INTO EXISTENCE, THE MALE IZANAGI AND THE FEMALE IZANAMI. AND CHARGED THEM WITH CREATING THE FIRST LAND TO BE. THEM DO THIS, IZANAGI AND IZANAMI WERE GIVEN A SPEAR DECORATED WITH JEWELS, NAMED AME-NO-NUBOKO, THE HEAVENLY SPEAR. THE TWO DEITIES THEN WENT TO THE BRIDGE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH, AME-NO-UKIHASHI, THE "FLOATING BRIDGE OF HEAVEN", AND CHURNED THE SEA BELOW WITH THE SPEAR. WHEN DROPS OF SALTY WATER FELL FROM THE SPEAR, ONO-GOROSHIMA, THE "SELF-FORMING ISLAND", WAS CREATED. THEY DESCENDED FROM THE BRIDGE OF HEAVEN AND MADE THEIR HOME ON THE ISLAND. EVENTUALLY THEY WISHED TO BE MATED, SO THEY BUILT A PILLAR CALLED AME-NO-MIHASHIRA, THE "PILLAR OF HEAVEN", AND AROUND IT THEY BUILT A PALACE CALLED YAHIKO-DONO. IZANAGI AND IZANAMI CIRCLED THE PILLAR IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS, AND WHEN THEY MET ON THE OTHER SIDE, IZANAMI SPOKE FIRST IN GREETING. IZANAGI DIDN'T THINK THAT THIS WAS THE PROPER THING TO DO, BUT THEY MATED ANYHOW. THEY HAD TWO CHILDREN, HIRUKO, THE "LEECH-CHILD", AND AWASHIMA, THE "FAINT ISLAND", BUT THEY WERE BORN DEFORMED AND ARE NOT CONSIDERED DEITIES. THEY PUT THE CHILDREN INTO A BOAT AND SET THEM OUT TO SEA. THEN PETITIONED THE OTHER GODS FOR AN ANSWER AS TO WHAT THEY DID WRONG. THEY WERE TOLD THAT THE MALE DEITY SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN FIRST IN GREETING DURING THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY. SO IZANAGI AND IZANAMI WENT AROUND THE PILLAR AGAIN. THIS TIME IZANAGI SPEAKING FIRST WHEN THEY MET, AND THEIR MARRIAGE WAS THEN SUCCESSFUL. THEY BORE SIX MORE ISLANDS AND MANY DEITIES. IZANAMI DIED GIVING BIRTH TO THE CHILD KAGU-TSUCHI, THE INCARNATION OF FIRE OR HO-MASUBI, THE CAUSER OF FIRE. SO ANGRY WAS IZANAGI AT THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE THAT HE KILLED THE NEWBORN CHILD, THEREBY CREATING DOZENS OF DEITIES. IZANAGI LAMENTED THE DEATH OF IZANAMI AND UNDERTOOK A JOURNEY TO YOMI, THE "SHADOWY LAND OF THE DEAD". QUICKLY, HE SEARCHED FOR IZANAMI AND FOUND HER. AT FIRST, IZANAGI COULD NOT SEE HER AT ALL FOR THE SHADOWS HID HER APPEARANCE WELL. NEVERTHELESS, HE ASKED HER TO RETURN WITH HIM. IZANAMI SPAT OUT AT HIM, INFORMING IZANAGI THAT HE WAS TOO LATE. SHE HAD ALREADY EATEN THE FOOD OF THE UNDERWORLD AND WAS NOW ONE WITH THE LAND OF THE DEAD. SHE COULD NO LONGER RETURN TO THE LIVING. IZANAGI WAS SHOCKED AT THIS NEWS BUT HE REFUSED TO GIVE IN TO HER WISHES OF BEING LEFT TO THE DARK EMBRACE OF YOMI. WHILE IZANAMI WAS SLEEPING, HE TOOK THE COMB THAT BOUND HIS LONG HAIR AND SET IT ALIGHT AS A TORCH. UNDER THE SUDDEN BURST OF LIGHT, HE SAW THE HORRID FORM OF THE ONCE BEAUTIFUL AND GRACEFUL IZANAMI. SHE WAS NOW A ROTTING FORM OF FLESH WITH MAGGOTS AND FOUL CREATURES RUNNING OVER HER PUTREFIED BODY. CRYING OUT LOUD, IZANAGI COULD NO LONGER CONTROL HIS FEAR AND STARTED TO RUN, INTENDING TO RETURN TO THE LIVING AND ABANDON HIS DEATH-RIDDEN WIFE. IZANAMI WOKE UP SHRIEKING AND INDIGNANT AND CHASED AFTER HIM. WILD SHIKOME, FOUL WOMEN, ALSO HUNTED FOR THE FRIGHTENED IZANAGI, INSTRUCTED BY IZANAMI TO BRING HIM BACK. IZANAGI BURST OUT OF THE ENTRANCE AND QUICKLY PUSHED A BOULDER INTO THE MOUTH OF THE CAVERN THAT WAS THE ENTRANCE OF YOMI. IZANAMI SCREAMED FROM BEHIND THIS IMPENETRABLE BARRICADE AND TOLD IZANAGI THAT IF HE LEFT HER SHE WOULD DESTROY 1,000 RESIDENTS OF THE LIVING EVERY DAY. HE FURIOUSLY REPLIED HE WOULD GIVE LIFE TO 1,500

-THE KOJIKI

八雲立つ
Yakumo
Tatsu

MY FAMILY USED TO RUN A SWORD SMITHY. IT SEEMS MY GRANDFATHER WAS A MASTER IN THIS LINE OF BUSINESS, KNOWN NATIONWIDE. BUT OUR HOUSE BURNED DOWN DURING AN AIR-RAID IN WORLD WAR TWO, AND MY GRANDFATHER PASSED AWAY

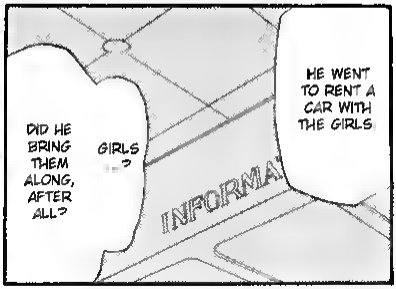


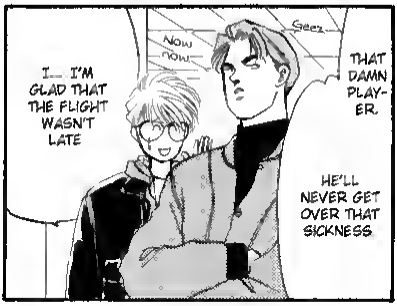
MY FATHER BECAME A PRETTY COMMON OFFICE WORKER, AND THE ONLY THING LEFT FROM THE SWORD SMITHING DAYS WAS A SINGLE DECORATED SWORD.

HEAVY.
Where
Where
Shimane-Ken*
*Prefecture in the West of Japan
Matsue-Shi*
*Capital of Shimane
I CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW HEAVY THIS IS

HE... HELLO, EMA-SENPAI.
HEEEY, NANACHI!
I'M OVER HERE HERE!
EXCHAN
WHY, YOU REALLY BROUGHT IT WITH YOU!
THIS SWORD!
KITANO-SENPAI AND THE REST.
HUH? WHERE ARE THE OTHERS...?
AHAHA. YOU'D FIT RIGHT INTO THE PLACE WE'RE GOING, THEN.
I FEEL JUST LIKE A GRUMPY OLD GEEZER.
THE FURTHER I CARRIED IT THE MORE ITS WEIGHT TROUBLED ME.
A— AT FIRST I WAS WONDERING ABOUT THAT, TOO
huff gasp

I'M SORRY I HAD TO BE THE ONLY ONE TO TAKE THE TRAIN,
BUT THEY'D NEVER HAVE LET ME GET ON A PLANE WITH THIS THING.


HE WENT TO RENT A CAR WITH THE GIRLS
INFORMA
DID HE BRING THEM ALONG, AFTER ALL?
GIRLS =_=?


Geez
Now Now
THAT DAMN PLAY-ER.
I— I'M GLAD THAT THE FLIGHT WASN'T LATE
HE'LL NEVER GET OVER THAT SICKNESS

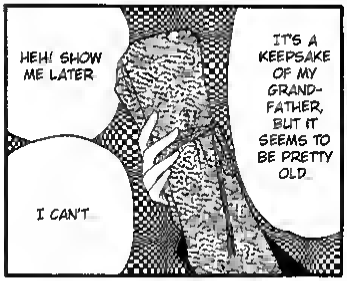
STUPID
I'M DOING THIS ALL FOR YOU

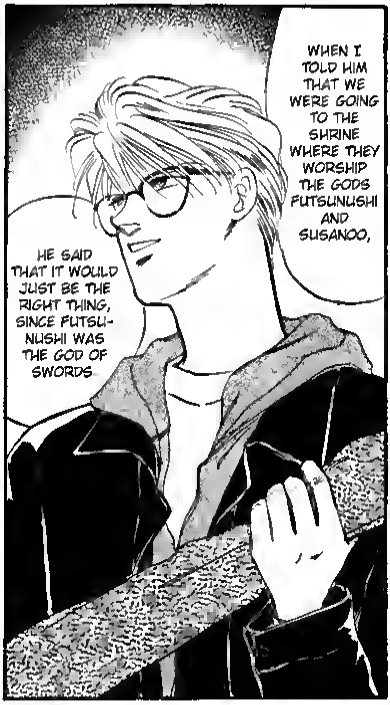
HUH?
FOR ME?

I TOLD YOU THAT WOULDN'T MATTER. HE TAKES ADVAN-TAGE OF YOU ANYWAY, SINCE YOU WERE HIS JUNIOR IN THE CLUB
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU AGREED AFTER ALL, EMA-SENPAI,
EVEN THOUGH YOU AS GOOD AS LEFT THE CLUB.

THAT'LL BE PRETTY TOUGH, WON'T IT...?
I DARE SAY
YOU'LL BE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR LOVE TRIANGLE FOR TWO DAYS, TOO!!
HEY, IT'S BETTER LIKE THIS!
HOW COULD I HAVE LET YOU GO ON YOUR OWN, HUH?
WOULD ONLY BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY SOMEONE LIKE KITANO
SOMEONE WHO'S AS GOOD-NATURED AS YOU...
OH, I DON'T... REALLY MIND.
YOU WERE OUT TO GET MY NOTES, WEREN'T YOU...?
AGAIN
SO...
WELL, I'LL HELP YOU OUT AND YOU'LL LET ME COPY YOUR NOTES.
WAHAHAHA. I HAVE TO GRADUATE NEXT YEAR TOO, YOU KNOW.
YOU SCRATCH MY BACK AND I'LL SCRATCH YOURS!
WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO TO THE SIGHT-SEEING RESORT, DO WE?
IZUMO IS IZUMO. IT'S STILL AN INVESTIGATION ABOUT THE ANCIENT IZUMO TRIBE
JULT
AH!
BUT WHEN I HEARD THAT IT'S A NAMELESS VILLAGE DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS, I WAS DISAPPOINTED
BUT THAT ASIDE, WHEN I HEARD THAT IT WAS AN EXPEDITION TO IZUMO, I THOUGHT IT'D BE THE GRAND SHRINE OF IZUMO OR THE HOT SPRINGS
Se sensei Sensei

MAIL
HE—HELLO, KITANO-SENPAI
I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO HAVE ME COME BY TRAIN
NOT AT ALL I'M GRATE-FUL
IS THIS IT?
THE SWORD YOUR FATHER TOLD YOU TO OFFER TO THE SHRINE


IT'S A KEEPSAKE OF MY GRAND-FATHER, BUT IT SEEMS TO BE PRETTY OLD
HEH! SHOW ME LATER
I CAN'T


WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE GOING TO THE SHRINE WHERE THEY WORSHIP THE GODS FUTSUNUSHI AND SUSANOO,
HE SAID THAT IT WOULD JUST BE THE RIGHT THING, SINCE FUTSU-NUSHI WAS THE GOD OF SWORDS.

MY GRANDFA-THER WAS ADAMANT THAT WE NEVER DRAW IT.
IT SEEMS THE ORNAMENTS OF THE SCABBARD WERE REPLACED, THOUGH
SO, THE CONTENTS ARE ALL RUSTY, THEN?
I DON'T KNOW NO ONE'S EVER SEEN IT, ANYWAY.

GEEZ! HE'S AS ARROGANT AS EVER!
BUT THE MEDIA'S BEEN REPORTING ON IT LATELY, TOO
HE'S GOT TALENT, AFTER ALL
HE CALLS HIMSELF THE LEADER OF A THEATRICAL TROUPE, BUT IT'S FUNDED BY HIS FATHER IN THE FIRST PLACE IT'S A TROUPE FOR HIS AMUSEMENT, I CALL IT
UGH, THAT PISSES ME OFF EVEN MORE
IF YOUR FATHER SAW IT, I'M SURE HE'D HAVE WANTED IT
HE HAS NO EYE FOR ANTIQUES WITH A HISTORY
SHOULD WE GO NOW?
KITANO-SAN!
HURRY, HURRY!
I DON'T DISLIKE HIM AS MUCH AS EMA-SENPAI DOES
THE ONLY PROBLEM IS
I just don't like his personality. He's a playboy and he's old.
Oh, there's a difference between us but that's not why I dislike him.
I'm in my sixth year at the university but that has nothing to do with it.
KITA-NO-SAN
USED TO BE THE LEADER OF THE DRAMA CLUB AT MY UNIVERSITY
AFTER HE GRADUATED, HE FOUNDED HIS OWN THEATRICAL TROUPE
HE EVEN STARTED TO ATTRACT ATTENTION AS A PROMISING SCRIPT WRITER
HELLO, I'M NANACHI TAKEO.
HOW SWEET!
HUH? IS THIS THE BOY? THE YOUNGER MAN WHO WORKS PART TIME FOR YOU
AH, LET ME INTRO-DUCE YOU

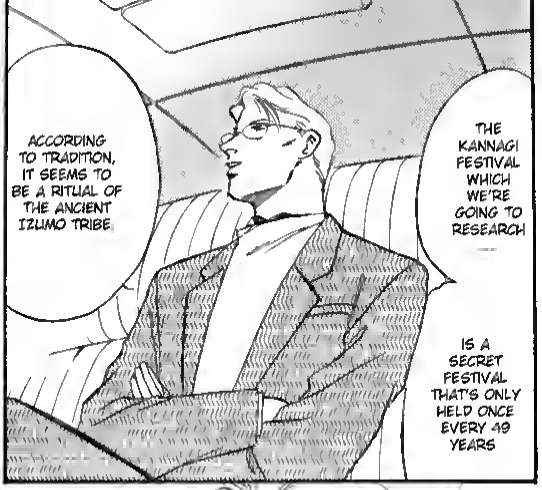
TODA CHIKA-KUN
SHE'S MY MOST VALUABLE ACTRESS
BEHIND HER IS SHIGEMATSU HARUKO-KUN
SHE'S VERY TALENTED I'VE ENTRUSTED HER WITH THE MANAGEMENT
HIS WEAKNESS FOR WOMEN IS EXTREMELY UNPLEASANT
HE LIKES IT, I GUESS
WATCHING HOW WOMEN FIGHT FOR HIM
UGH, WHAT BAD TASTE
PLEASE, CHIKA-CHAN
No way, no way!
NO WAY! I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL OR SOME-THING!
WHAT, YOU'RE TWENTY-ONE?!
HE'S THE SAME AGE AS YOU, CHIKA-KUN
NANACHI-KUN IS TWENTY-ONE
WHAT?!
I'M ROOTING FOR SHIGEMATSU-SAN
Kya ha ha ha ha

WHAT? WHERE ARE WE GOING TO STAY OVER, THEN?
NO, THERE ISN'T.
THERE'S AT LEAST AN INN THERE, RIGHT?
IT'S DEEPER IN THE MOUNTAINS THAN I EXPECTED.
THE MAN FROM THE NEWSPAPER WHO TOLD ME ABOUT THE VILLAGE FOUND A PLACE FOR US TO SLEEP.
DON'T WOR-RY.
CL OT TER
CL OT TER
ISN'T THAT LIKE KENDO*?
IS THAT IAI THE ONE WITH THE TECHNIQUE OF DRAWING A SWORD QUICKLY IN A SITTING POSITION?
THEY USE REAL SWORDS.
THAT FAMILY SEEMS TO BE VERY INFLUENTIAL IN THE VILLAGE. THEY OFFERED US THEIR SEPARATE GUEST HOUSE TO STAY IN.
IT'S IAI. IAI...
ANCIENT MARTIAL ARTS?
SO WE'RE GOING TO STAY OVER AT A HOUSE IN THE VILLAGE?
YES, AT THE HOUSE OF THE HEAD OF AN ANCIENT MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL.

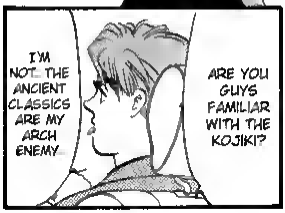
*Japanese fencing with bamboo swords.

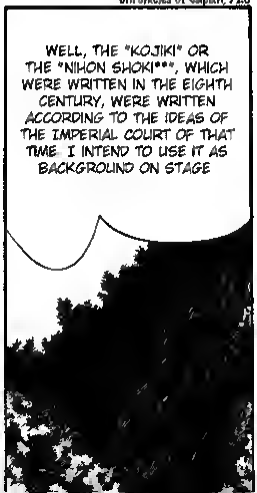
出雲狂騒曲 ①

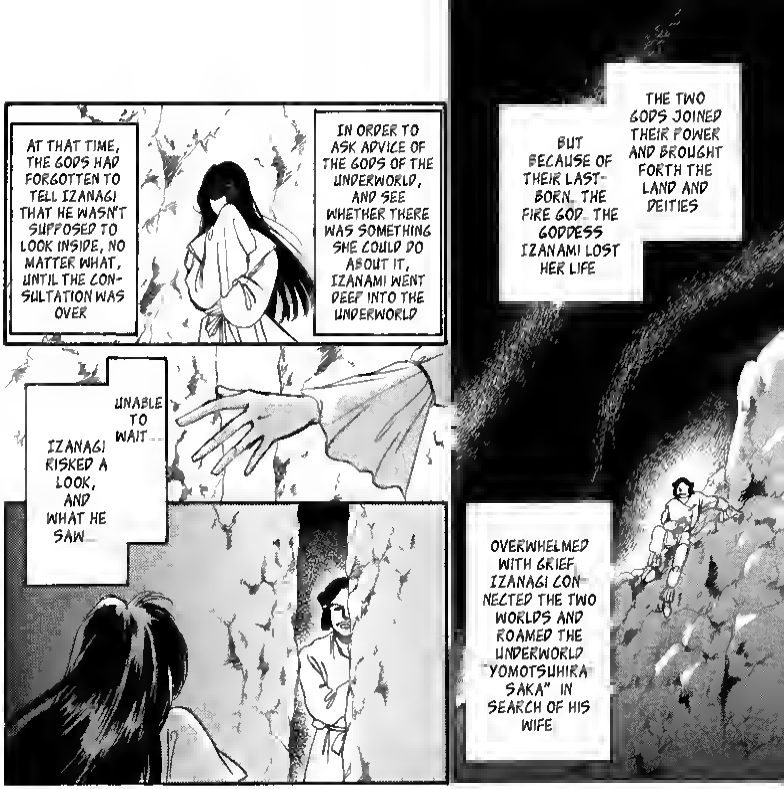
1991年11月
「八雲立つ」取材の為
樹は　同業者N氏（かつて　日本ーランドセルが似合う女子大生と異名を取った）と共に旅立った。
当日　空港で落合い既に出雲に　特に宿泊先の温泉にとんでいる二人である。
ゲートを入ると小さなバスが待っている。これで飛行機まで行くのか!?　ふと不安にかられ　それでも旅行に心踊る我々は　冗談を言いあう。
「えー　バス〜〜〜!?　すっごいプロペラ機に乗せられたりして〜」
「そうそう　落ちるの当然みたいな奴〜〜」
古来不吉な事は言葉にしてはいけないという先人の教えを無視する我々の目の前に　やがて超小さいプロペラ機が現れたのは言うまでもない。



*Chronicle of Old Japan
**Chronicles of Japan, 720






THE TWO GODS JOINED THEIR POWER AND BROUGHT FORTH THE LAND AND DEITIES
BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR LAST-BORN, THE FIRE GOD, THE GODDESS IZANAMI LOST HER LIFE
OVERWHELMED WITH GRIEF IZANAGI CONNECTED THE TWO WORLDS AND ROAMED THE UNDERWORLD "YOMOTSUHIRA SAKA" IN SEARCH OF HIS WIFE
AT THAT TIME, THE GODS HAD FORGOTTEN TO TELL IZANAGI THAT HE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO LOOK INSIDE, NO MATTER WHAT, UNTIL THE CONSULTATION WAS OVER
IN ORDER TO ASK ADVICE OF THE GODS OF THE UNDERWORLD, AND SEE WHETHER THERE WAS SOMETHING SHE COULD DO ABOUT IT, IZANAMI WENT DEEP INTO THE UNDERWORLD
UNABLE TO WAIT...
IZANAGI RISKED A LOOK, AND WHAT HE SAW...

WAS IZANAMI'S HORRIBLY DISFIGURED FORM
IZANAMI, SHAMED WHEN HER HUSBAND RAN AWAY FROM HER, RASHLY SENT OGRES AND UGLY WOMEN AFTER HIM...
IZANAGI BARELY GOT AWAY...
AND CLOSED OFF THE ENTRANCE TO THE UNDERWORLD WITH A HUGE BOULDER...

IS ALSO CALLED IFUY-ASAKA, THE LAND OF IZUMO
AND YOMOTSU-HIRASAKA
THAT BOUL-DER...
IS CALLED THE GOD OF CHIGAESHI
AND ALSO...
THEN IZUMO IS WRITTEN WITH KANJI WITH AN UNDERWORLD THEME.
HEH!
DON'T TELL ME THE NAME OF THE VILLAGE IS IFUYAMURA OR SOME-THING
WHAT?
IS CALLED THE CHI-GAESHI SHRINE
THE SHRINE WE'RE GOING TO...
BUT THERE MUST BE SOME-THING BEHIND "IFUYA-MURA".
THE KANJI CHARACTERS ARE DIFFER-ENT...
YOU'RE SERIOUS?!
CLATTER
CLATTER
YOU'RE VERY SHARP.
EXACT-LY.

IF YOU CUT JAPAN IN HALF YOU GET A NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN PART
THE TRIBES OF THE SOUTH WERE THE KUMASO, THE HAYATO, THE EZO, AND THE IZUMO TRIBE. THE TRIBE OF THE NORTH WAS THE HIMUKA TRIBE, WHICH BROUGHT FORTH THE SO-CALLED YAMATO DYNASTY.
WHAT'S THAT ANCIENT IZUMO TRIBE YOU WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT, ANYWAY?
PERSONALLY, I THINK THAT THEY WERE A MIX OF A SOUTHERN FISHING TRIBE AND THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF JAPAN.
THE JAPANESE ARE A MIX OF ALL SORTS OF RACES
WELL, THE OPINIONS OF THE JAPANESE ABOUT THEIR ORIGIN DIFFER, SO YOU CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN
LIKE WHAT?
THE DYNASTY SPOKE OF SUCH UNCIVILIZED TRIBES WITH UTMOST CONTEMPT.
THE HIMUKA TRIBE THAT CAME FROM THE MAINLAND WAS A BELLIGERENT RACE, SO IT INCREASED ITS INFLUENCE MORE AND MORE
BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT THEY WERE A THORN IN THE DYNASTY'S SIDE, SINCE THE IZUMO TRIBE OF THE YAYOI PERIOD* WAS HARD TO HANDLE AND WOULDN'T SUBMIT
THEY CALLED THEM DEVILS OR SNAKES, DISPARAGINGLY.
FOR EXAMPLE
THE KUMASO,

*ca. 2000BC-200AC

GROUND SPIDERS ...
THE IZUMO TRIBE
WAS CALLED "GROUND SPIDERS."
AM I THIS MUCH OF A HUMANIST?
SOMEHOW...
IT'S REALLY STRANGE.
I ALSO FELT IT WHEN I READ THE KOJIKI.
BUT IT WASN'T AS STRONG AS NOW.
THAT'S WHY THEY SAID THEY WEREN'T HUMANS ANYMORE.
CRAZY. EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE HUMANS, TOO.
THEY WERE BARBARIANS THAT PUT UP RESISTANCE.
...WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S STRANGE...
THIS DISAGREEABLE FEELING

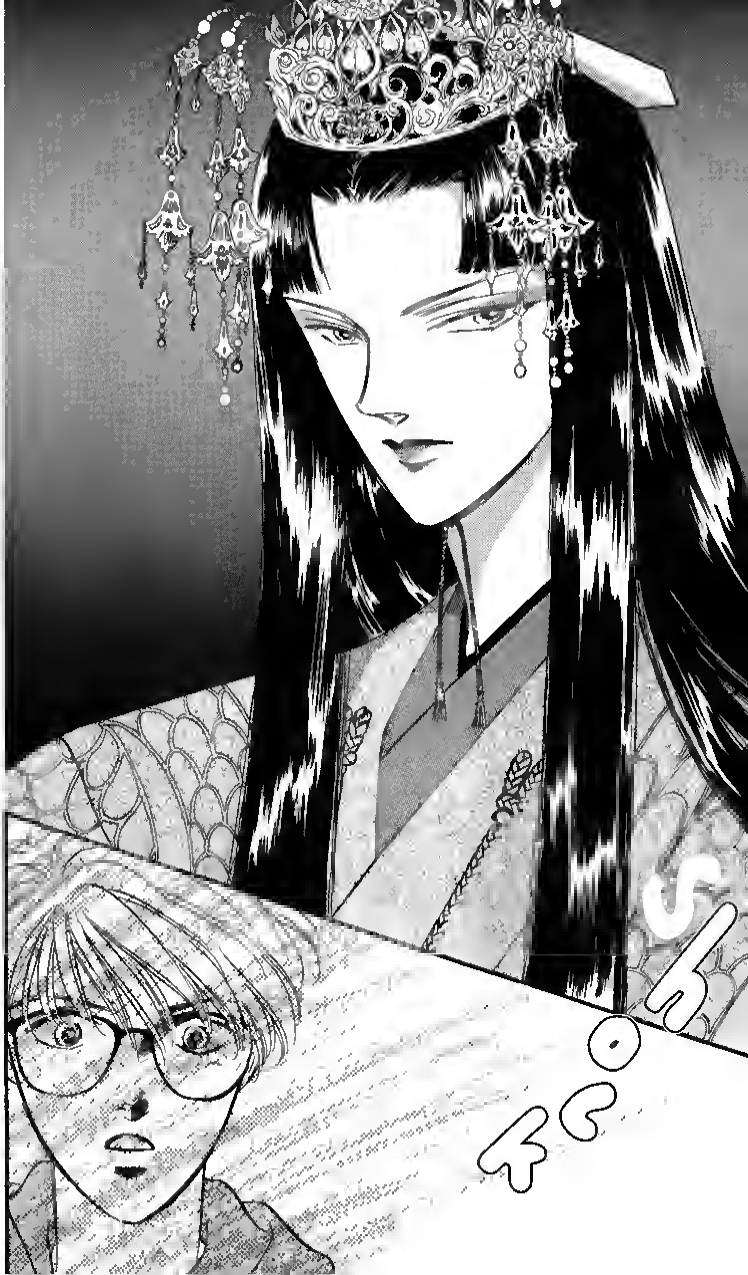
EVER SINCE I CAME TO THIS REGION
IT TOOK LONGER THAN EXPECTED.
IT'S ALREADY PAST FIVE
WE SHOULD SAY HELLO TO THE FUZUCHIS, AS LONG AS WE AREN'T TOO LATE
THE FUZU-CHIS?
THAT'S THE FAMILY THAT'S PUTTING US UP.
IT'S A FIVE MINUTE RIDE FROM HERE.
BUT TODAY'S THE FESTIVAL, TOO, ISN'T IT?
THE EVENING AT THE SHRINE WON'T GO ON TOO LONG, WILL IT?
BUT, YOU SEE,
THE GREETING IS IMPORTANT TOO. HERE IN THE COUNTRY
SO
SHOULD I GO AND TAKE PHOTOS, THEN?!
YOU KNOW,
YOU REALLY ARE WAY TOO STUPID
MUTTER?
MUTTER?
HUH?
YOU'RE TOO GOOD-NATURED!
WHY SHOULD THE OTHERS GET TO RELAX WHILE WE'RE AT WORK, HUH?
HUH?

THAT'S WHY I ASKED YOU TO GO WITH THE OTHERS...
STUPID.
IF I STAYED WITH THEM I'D ONLY GET AN ULCER!
NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS, EMA-SENPAI IS GOOD-NATURED TOO
ANYWAY, IT'S DARK.
IS THERE REALLY A FESTIVAL HERE?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT... IT'S QUIET, ISN'T IT?
THERE AREN'T ANY PEOPLE AROUND EITHER.
HEY...
IS THAT IT?! THE CHI-GAESHI SHRINE...
HUH...?
UWAH...
IT'S KIND OF CREEPY..
Not very inviting.

IT'S A FESTIVAL, AFTER ALL.
WELL, YES, THERE ARE
phew
What a relief!
THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE!
THANK GOD!
SHOULD WE GO ASK?
WILL THERE BE A SHINTO RITUAL OR SOMETHING?
PEOPLE ARE GATHERING OVER THERE.
IT'S STRANGELY QUIET.
BUT, HEY, THERE AREN'T ANY NIGHT STALLS HERE.
click click
SO BOOTH-KEEPERS WOULDN'T COME HERE EITHER.
WE'RE REALLY DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS,
THE DEDICATION DANCE OF THE SHRINE MAIDEN IS GOING TO START
EXCUSE ME, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW?

BUT THIS ATMO-SPHERE
CAN WE DO THAT? IT'S A RITUAL, ISN'T IT?
OF COURSE WE CAN
WHAT? THE SHRINE MAIDEN IS GOING TO DANCE?!
LET'S TAKE PHOTOS OF HER PHOTOS!
EVEN THOUGH THIS MANY PEOPLE HAVE GATHERED
WHY ON EARTH IS IT THIS QUIET HERE?
IT'S SO QUIET THAT YOU COULD HEAR A PIN DROP
AH
JOLT
UH

THUMP
THUMP
TAP


ちょっ
と?

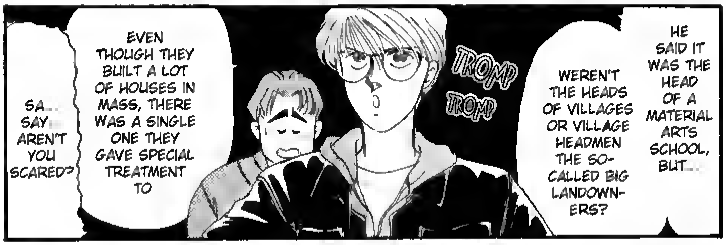
...HUH!?
TAP
TAP
IT'S TRUE
WOAH! THE MAIDEN'S GORGEOUS!
SIGH
Y... YOU'RE RIGHT.

THE FLICKERING OF THE FIRE...?
NO,
IT HAS THE SHAPE...
OF A HUMAN...!!
WHAT'S THAT...?!
BEHIND HER...

SHOCK
DOESN'T... ANYBODY SEE IT?!
THAT SHADOW!
EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE...
IT'S HUMAN SHAPE?!
JOLT
HEY, NANACHI!!
WHY ARE YOU SPACED OUT?
THE DEDICATION DANCE IS OVER.
HUH?
ARE YOU TIRED, OR WHAT?
TIRED...
I SEE, THAT MUST BE IT.

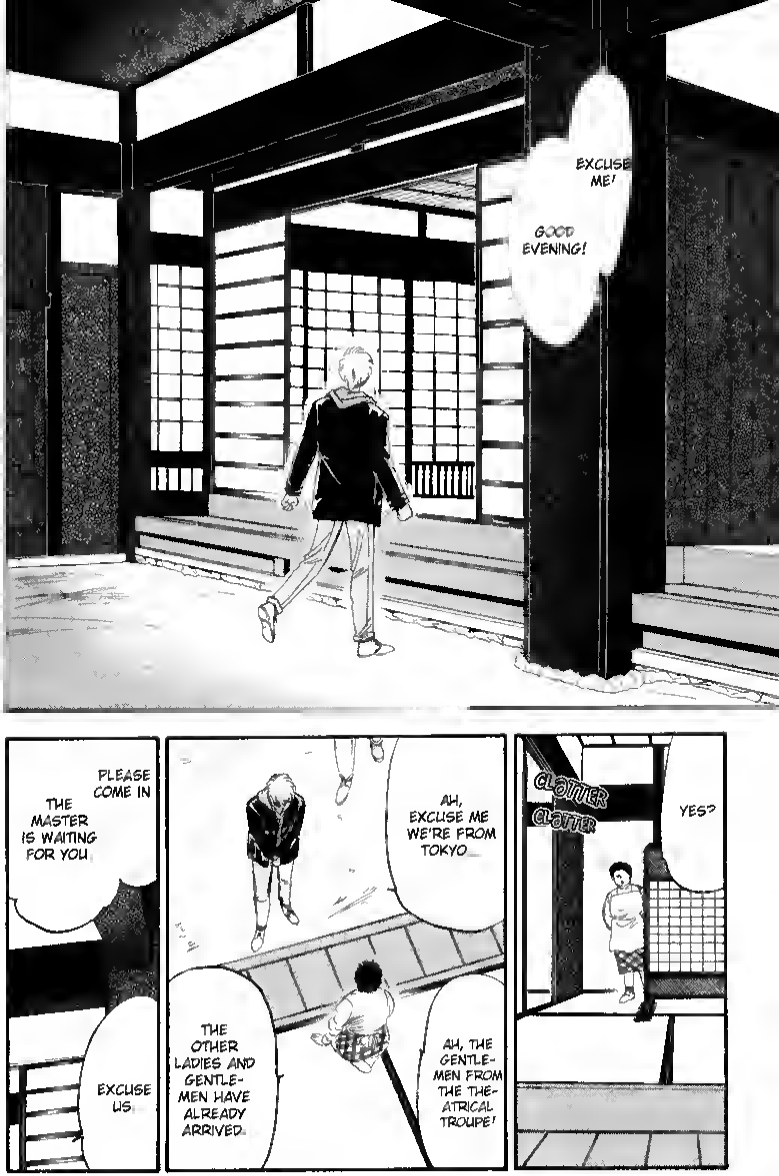
YEAH
I FELT THAT WAY TOO.
IT JUST WASN'T THE RIGHT MOOD FOR PHOTOS. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS SO TENSE.
ONLY ONE.
DID YOU TAKE SOME?!
AH, THE PHOTOS!
IT WAS MY IMAGINATION, I GUESS...
ANYWAY, LET'S HURRY UP AND GO TO OUR QUARTERS.
THERE WEREN'T ANY STREET LAMPS AROUND HERE.
OKAY, BUT...
THERE WAS ONLY ONE PATH, SO IF WE GO BACK THE SAME WAY, WE CAN'T GET LOST.
I SEE
BUT, HEY, IT'S PITCH-DARK.
Scary

NA... NANA-CHI!!!
I... IS THIS REALLY THE RIGHT WAY?
THERE AREN'T ANY HOUSES AROUND ANY-MORE.
I TOLD YOU THAT IT WAS ALL RIGHT
DIDN'T THEY SAY THAT IT WAS A HUGE PROPERTY A LITTLE OUT OF THE WAY?


HE SAID IT WAS THE HEAD OF A MATERIAL ARTS SCHOOL, BUT...
WEREN'T THE HEADS OF VILLAGES OR VILLAGE HEADMEN THE SO-CALLED BIG LANDOWN-ERS?
TROMP TROMP
EVEN THOUGH THEY BUILT A LOT OF HOUSES IN MASS, THERE WAS A SINGLE ONE THEY GAVE SPECIAL TREATMENT TO
SA... SAY, AREN'T YOU SCARED?

NO, I'M FINE. THE MOON'S SHINING, SEE.
I'VE NEVER REALLY WORRIED ABOUT THE DARK-NESS.
SOME-HOW I ADMIRE YOU
FOR BEING... SO FEAR-LESS.
AAH!
eek!
OH... THAT'S IT..!!

IT LOOKS JUST LIKE A FORTRESS
THAT
WAS MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE FUZUCHI FAMILY
I... I'M FRIGHTENED.
NO WAY...
THI... THIS IS THE FUZUCHI'S HOUSE?!
PAZZOCLUB


EXCUSE ME!
GOOD EVENING!
YES?
CLOTTER CLOTTER
AH, EXCUSE ME WE'RE FROM TOKYO...
AH, THE GENTLEMEN FROM THE THEATRICAL TROUPE!
THE OTHER LADIES AND GENTLEMEN HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED.
EXCUSE US.
PLEASE COME IN
THE MASTER IS WAITING FOR YOU.

出雲狂騒曲 ②

直接響いてくるエンジン音と振動に耐えてよそ1時間。

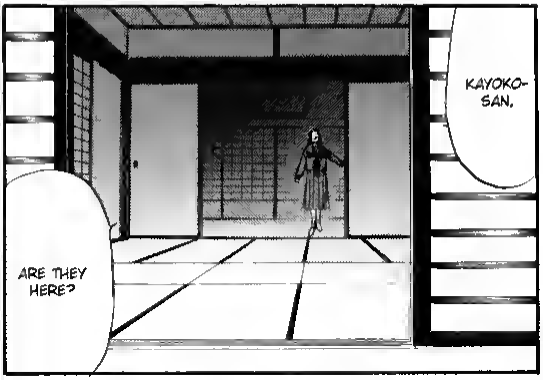
ようやく出雲に到着。1日目は　出雲大社に参拝する予定である。

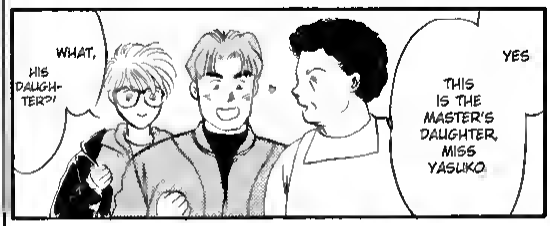
さすがに観光地だけあって　タクシーの運ちゃんは　明日からの観光にこの車を使わないかと大プッシュである。

別に走ってくれればトラクター以外なら何でもいい。明日の出発の時間を約束して1日目の宿に到着した。(この宿は　かの竹内まりやさんの実家なのである)

出雲大社に行くもすでに4時。雰囲気はいいが　何しろ寒い。

小泉八雲が寒さに負けて逃げだしたのも無理ないと思ったのであった。

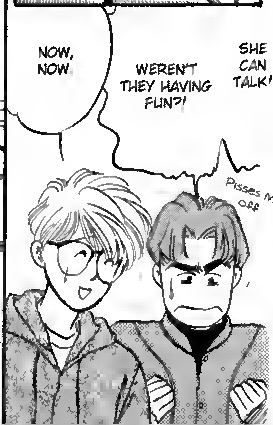


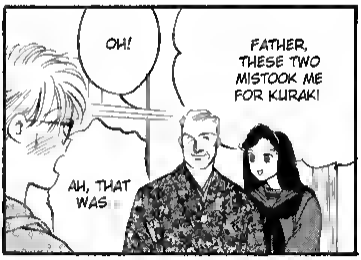


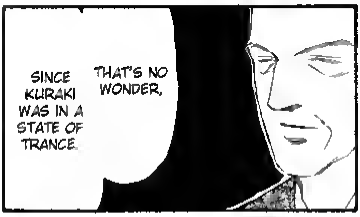
WHOA, YOU GOT HERE FAST. IS THERE A SHORTCUT?!
YOU WERE JUST DANCING AT THE SHRINE, WEREN'T YOU?
WE SAW YOU!!
YOU'RE MISTAKEN. THAT WASN'T ME.
He he
OH...
WHAT?
THE SHRINE MAIDEN!
LITTLE BRO-THER?!
MY LITTLE BRO-THER.
THAT WAS KURAKI.
BUT AS MY FATHER ALWAYS SAYS.
CURRENTLY WE ONLY DO RITUALS AT THE CHIGAESHI SHRINE.
FOR GENERATIONS MY FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SHRINES AROUND THE AREA AS SHRINE MAIDENS.

HEH!
A SHRINE MAIDEN HAS NO SPECIFIC GENDER.
SO WE SLIP INTO CLOTHES OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER. WHEN I PERFORM I WEAR MEN'S CLOTHES
TO SIMPLIFY IT THE ACTRESSES OF THE ANCIENT IZUMO OR OF THE SHIRABYOSHI* ALL WORE MEN'S CLOTHES, DIDN'T THEY?
THAT TRADITION SEEMS TO HAVE DESCENDED FROM THE ANCIENT SHRINE MAIDENS

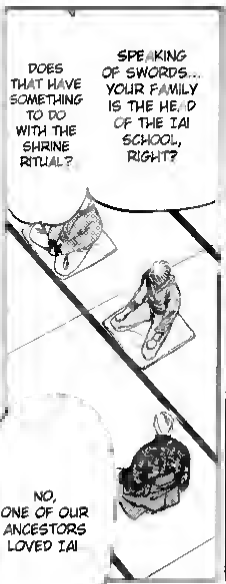
*Style of theatre at the end of the Heian period (794–1185)

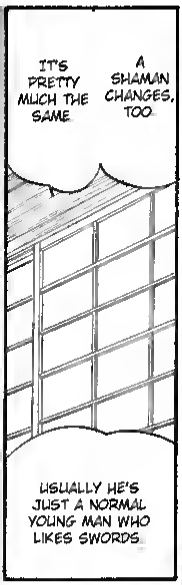


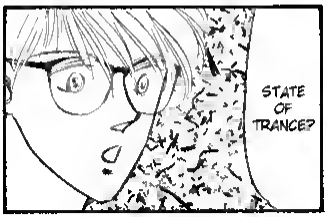

OH!
FATHER, THESE TWO MISTOOK ME FOR KURAKI
AH, THAT WAS...

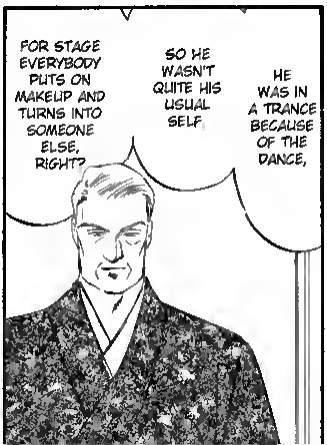

THAT'S NO WONDER,
SINCE KURAKI WAS IN A STATE OF TRANCE.

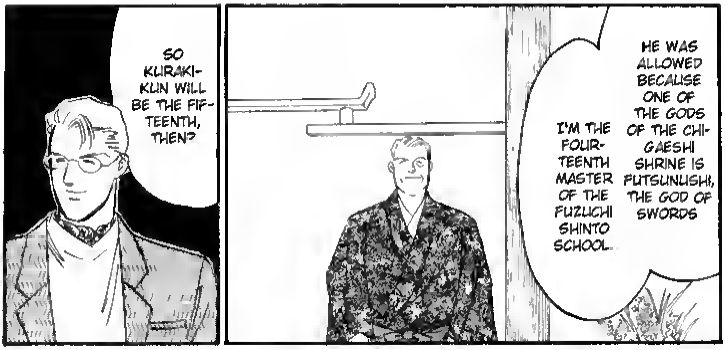
I HEARD YOU VISITED THE CHIGAESHI SHRINE?
YES.


SPEAKING OF SWORDS... YOUR FAMILY IS THE HEAD OF THE IAI SCHOOL, RIGHT?
DOES THAT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE SHRINE RITUAL?
NO, ONE OF OUR ANCESTORS LOVED IAI

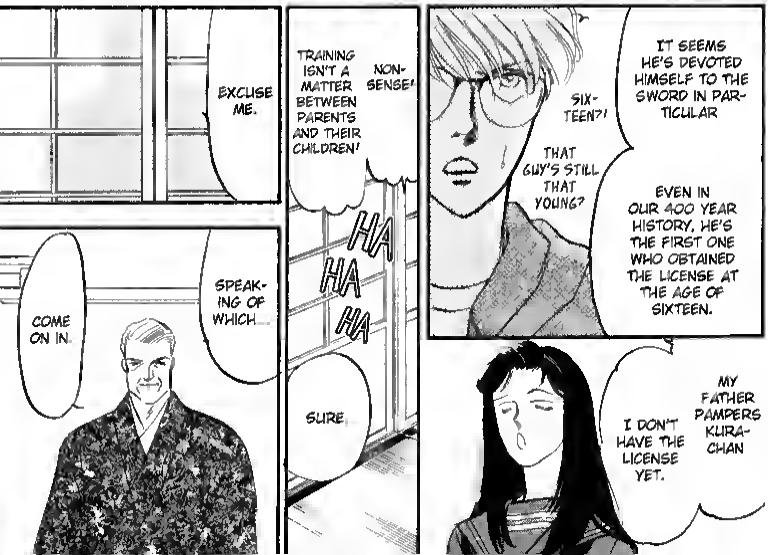

A SHAMAN CHANGES, TOO.
IT'S PRETTY MUCH THE SAME.
USUALLY HE'S JUST A NORMAL YOUNG MAN WHO LIKES SWORDS.


STATE OF TRANCE?

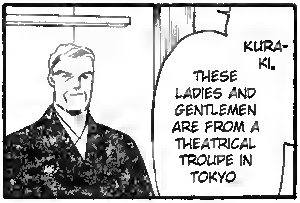

HE WAS IN A TRANCE BECAUSE OF THE DANCE,
SO HE WASN'T QUITE HIS USUAL SELF.
FOR STAGE EVERYBODY PUTS ON MAKEUP AND TURNS INTO SOMEONE ELSE, RIGHT?


SO KURAKI-KUN WILL BE THE FIFTEENTH, THEN?
I'M THE FOURTEENTH MASTER OF THE FUZUCHI SHINTO SCHOOL.
HE WAS ALLOWED BECAUSE ONE OF THE GODS OF THE CHIGAESHI SHRINE IS FUTSUNUSHI, THE GOD OF SWORDS
YOU'RE GRANTED A DIPLOMA THAT CERTIFIES YOU HAVE FULL MASTERSHIP OF THREE TECHNIQUES. KURAKI ALREADY HOLDS HIS LICENSE, THOUGH.
IN OUR SCHOOL WE DON'T HAVE DAN* RANKINGS.
YES, I SUPPOSE SO.

*Like karate has different belts you attain, kendo ranks people by "dan".


EXCUSE ME.
TRAINING ISN'T A MATTER BETWEEN PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN!
NONSENSE!
HA HA HA
SURE.
COME ON IN.
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
SIX-TEEN?!
THAT GUY'S STILL THAT YOUNG?
IT SEEMS HE'S DEVOTED HIMSELF TO THE SWORD IN PARTICULAR
EVEN IN OUR 400 YEAR HISTORY, HE'S THE FIRST ONE WHO OBTAINED THE LICENSE AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN.
I DON'T HAVE THE LICENSE YET.
MY FATHER PAMPERS KURA-CHAN

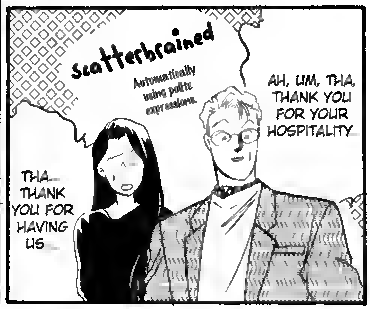
HELLO, I JUST RETURNED.

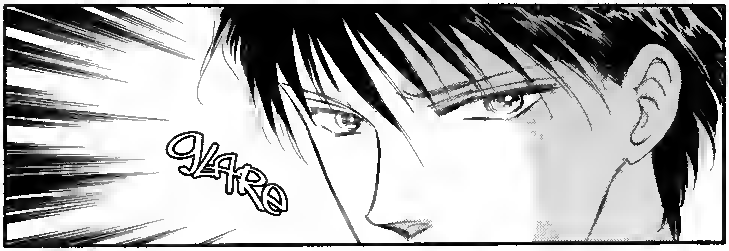

KURA-KI.
THESE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN ARE FROM A THEATRICAL TROUPE IN TOKYO

HUH?!

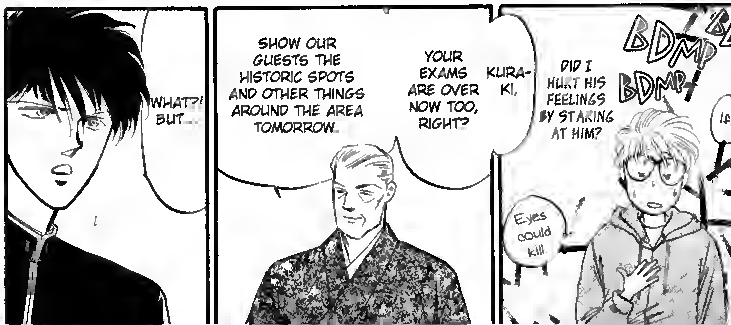
WELCOME TO OUR HOME

I WONDER IF THAT'S BECAUSE HE DOESN'T HAVE THE MAKEUP ON
SOMEHOW HE LOOKS TOTALLY DIFFERENT THAN WHEN HE WAS THE SHRINE MAIDEN


Scatterbrained
Automatically using polite expressions.
AH, UM, THA, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY
THA... THANK YOU FOR HAVING US


GLARE

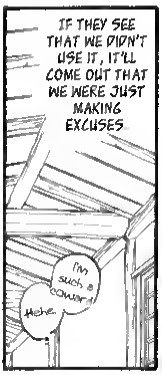
GASP


WHAT?! BUT...
SHOW OUR GUESTS THE HISTORIC SPOTS AND OTHER THINGS AROUND THE AREA TOMORROW.
YOUR EXAMS ARE OVER NOW TOO, RIGHT?
KURAKI,
DID I HURT HIS FEELINGS BY STARING AT HIM?
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
Eyes could kill
Ah

BUT THE RITUAL IS STILL...
YOUR TASK WAS FINISHED WITH THE DEDICATION DANCE TONIGHT AT THE SHRINE
THE REST OF THE RITUAL IS UP TO ME
UM, WE'D BE FINE IF WE JUST HAD A MAP...
NO, NO. DON'T WORRY.
IT'S A MATTER OF COURSE TO ENTERTAIN GUESTS WHO CAME A LONG WAY.
UNDERSTAND, KURAKI?
... YES.
SO, I'M GOING TO PICK YOU UP TOMORROW MORNING, THEN.
AH, THA, THANK YOU.
PLEASE DO THAT ...
EXCUSE ME.
CLOCK
RIGHT THEN...
WHEN HE WAS OBVIOUSLY UNHAPPY, DESPITE HIS OBEDIENCE
I FELT KIND OF UNEASY

OH MY, AMAZING...
THIS IS THEIR "GUEST-HOUSE"?
IT ALONE IS BIGGER THAN MY HOUSE
SPEAKING OF WHICH, THAT KURAKI KID BEING ONLY SIXTEEN IS AMAZING TOO!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT HE'S THE SAME AGE AS MY LITTLE BROTHER.
THE WAY HE WELCOMED US FORMALLY
IT'S DIFFERENT IF YOU GROW UP DISCIPLINED IN MARTIAL ARTS AFTER ALL, ISN'T IT?
YOU MEAN THAT HE'S MORE REFINED THAN EXPECTED...? HE'S PERFECT.
IF HE WAS OVER EIGHTEEN I'D RECRUIT HIM ON THE SPOT
AH, THAT'S A GREAT IDEA!!
WITH A HANDSOME GUY LIKE HIM, I'D FEEL LIKE PLAYING TOO!
HEY, HEY AND YOU CALL YOURSELF AN ACTRESS?
CHIKA-CHAN, IT'S ALREADY LATE.
OH!

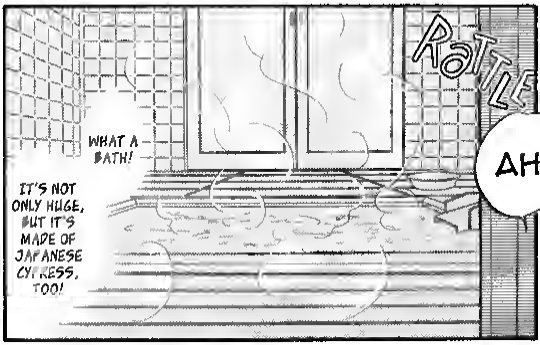
at a loss
HEY,
IT'S PITCH-DARK OUTSIDE.
SO WHAT?
GOOD GRACIOUS! IF IT'S GETTING ON YOUR NERVES, I'LL GO OUTSIDE
COME ON, KITANO-SAN, LET'S TAKE A WALK
EXCUSE ME!
THIS ISN'T SOME SCHOOL OUTING. AT LEAST TAKE THAT INTO CONSIDERATION.
STOP ACTING LIKE A CHAPERON, SHIGEMATSU-SAN
IN A HUGE HOUSE LIKE THIS, A LITTLE BIT OF NOISE WON'T HURT.
BAM
ROTTLE
YOU SAVED ME.
WE'RE KIND OF TIRED, YOU SEE.
CAN NANACHI AND I GO TO THE BATHROOM AHEAD OF YOU?
OH SURE
THANKS.
WELL, THEN, GOOD NIGHT.
IF YOU WERE ON YOUR OWN, YOU'D PROBABLY HAVE PUT UP WITH IT LONGER.
SEE, IT'S A GOOD THING THAT I CAME ALONG, I THINK.
ABSOLUTELY
BUT WILL KITANO-SAN BE ALL RIGHT? ALL BY HIMSELF


IF THEY SEE THAT WE DIDN'T USE IT, IT'LL COME OUT THAT WE WERE JUST MAKING EXCUSES
I'm such a coward...
Hiche

ACTUALLY, I'M TIRED TOO, AND I'D LIKE TO GO TO BED RIGHT AWAY, BUT

rattle
HUH?
WHAT ABOUT THE BATH —?
NO, THANKS I'M REALLY TIRED, GO ON WITH-OUT ME
SURE HE'S FINE. HE LIKES THAT KIND OF THING

Clink


WHAT A BATH!
IT'S NOT ONLY HUGE, BUT IT'S MADE OF JAPANESE CYPRESS, TOO!
Rattle
AH!

HUH?!

COMING HERE WAS A GOOD IDEA, AFTER ALL

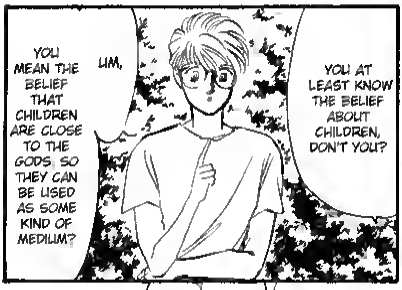
IT'S LIKE A DREAM TO BE ABLE TO GET INTO SOME-THING LIKE THIS ALL BY MYSELF
FOR SOMEONE WHO'S USED TO GETTING INTO A TINY TUB IN AN APARTMENT...
I'm worn-out...

FWUP
SP.006
SPIRITS?!

Rattle
fwsh

I THOUGHT THEY'D BE AROUND HERE, BUT...
ガサガサ
rustle
TROMP
I'M SURE I SAW THEM!
THERE'S A SMALL STREAM, YOU SEE.
STOP, DON'T GO ANY FURTHER!
HUH?

KU, KURA-KI-KUN!
TH, THERE WAS JUST SOME-THING THAT LOOKED LIKE SPIRITS... DIDN'T YOU SEE THEM?!
I SAW THEM.
SO WHAT?
S, SO WHAT...?
SPIRITS CAN OFTEN BE SEEN HERE,
SINCE THIS VALLEY IS THE ONLY "PLACE" WHERE THEY CAN GATHER EASILY.
SO... SO YOU SEE THINGS LIKE THAT ALL THE TIME?!
YOUR FAMILY IS A FAMILY OF SHAMANS, RIGHT? DON'T YOU EXORCIZE THEM OR SOMETHING?
AREN'T YOU MIS-UNDER-STANDING SOME-THING?
HUH?!
A SHAMAN ISN'T AN EXORCIST LIKE A MEDICINE MAN.


YOU MEAN THE BELIEF THAT CHILDREN ARE CLOSE TO THE GODS, SO THEY CAN BE USED AS SOME KIND OF MEDIUM?
UM,
YOU AT LEAST KNOW THE BELIEF ABOUT CHILDREN, DON'T YOU?

ACTUALLY, A SHAMAN STANDS BETWEEN HUMANS AND GODS.
HE'S A DEMIGOD THROUGH WHOM THE GODS SPEAK.
THAT'S WHY HE'S CALLED "MIKO", THE DIVINE CHILD.

HUH? I HEARD EARLIER
YOU'RE SIXTEEN, RIGHT?
BY THE WAY,
HOW OLD DO YOU THINK I AM?
CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SEVEN ARE CONSIDERED TO BE DIVINE...

IN MY FAMILY, SEVEN YEARS ARE EQUAL TO ONE YEAR
IN OTHER WORDS,

WHAT?!
NOPE, I'M TWO YEARS AND A FEW MONTHS OLD.

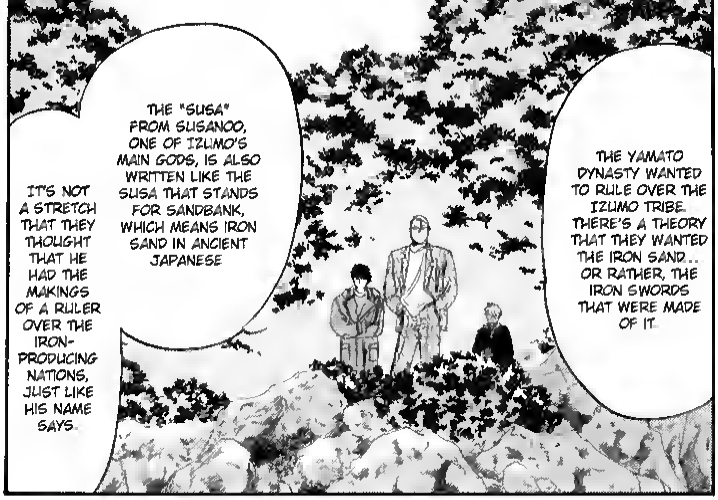
THE FESTIVAL ISN'T HELD ONCE EVERY 49 YEARS, BUT THE YEAR THE FUZUCHI HEAD BECOMES A MORTAL MAN.
YOU GUYS GOT IT ALL WRONG.
SO THAT'S WHY IT'S HELD ONCE EVERY 49 YEARS...
AH, I SEE!
HE'LL GO BACK TO BEING A MORTAL MAN.
MY FATHER WILL BE 49 THIS YEAR.
UNDER-STAND?
THE TRUTH IS THAT THE WHOLE VILLAGE IS ON EDGE.
YOU PROBABLY DON'T UNDER-STAND.
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT!
MY FATHER IS KIND AND GOOD-NATURED THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T OPPOSE HIM WHEN HE SAID WE HAD TO ENTERTAIN OUR GUESTS, BUT
LISTEN, YOU...
I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EARS!
THAT "WELCOME" MEANT "GO SOMEWHERE ELSE".
I...
IT'S A NUISANCE THAT HE INVITED TROUBLE-MAKERS ...
EVEN WITH THE ENERGY OF THE VALLEY ALREADY DISRUPTED

YOU DIDN'T JUST COME OUT HERE BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO DO RESEARCH, DID YOU?
WHA...
HOW MUCH CAN YOU RESEARCH IN TWO DAYS, HUH?
THAT'S A WASTE OF TIME
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE GOING TO STAY FOREVER. IT'LL BE TWO DAYS AT THE MOST.
CONSIDER THIS A WARNING
GOOD NIGHT.
WHA...
WHA... WHA...
YOU'RE AT THE WRONG PLACE. IF YOU WANT A NICE PLEASURE TRIP, YOU SHOULD CHOOSE SOMEWHERE ELSE.
THESE AREN'T THE GROUNDS OF A COMMON SHINTO SHRINE. IF YOU COME HERE WITH EVIL DESIRES, IT'S NO JOKING MATTER.
"WARNING"...
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
HE SAID...?!
ぶるぶる

IT WAS AS GOOD AS SAYING THAT OUTSIDERS SHOULD LEAVE QUICKLY.
THAT WAS A TOTAL THREAT
AND THAT IT WOULDN'T DO US ANY GOOD TO STAY LONG
HOW EXACTLY IS HE A POLITE YOUNG WARRIOR, HUH?
HE'S A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.
WHAT'S WITH HIM?
THAT HIGH AND MIGHTY ATTITUDE THAT YOU WOULDN'T EVEN EXPECT FROM SOMEONE OLDER THAN YOURSELF.
NO MATTER HOW YOUNG I MAY LOOK, I'M STILL FIVE YEARS OLDER THAN HIM.
DON'T TELL ME HE THINKS THAT WE'RE THE SAME AGE?
Hah!
FOR SOME REASON...
THAT REALLY PISSES ME OFF!
A...
A...
CHAPTER 3

WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU CATCH A COLD?!
NO, I'M FINE.
SNIFF
DAMN! IT'S BECAUSE I WAS WANDERING AROUND IN A T-SHIRT YESTERDAY.
BUT WHAT ANNOYS ME EVEN MORE IS THIS GUY
THIS WAY, PLEASE
OH, I'M SORRY IT'S SO EARLY IN THE MORNING.
WHAT'S THIS SUPPOSED TO MEAN? HIS ATTITUDE

IT'S MILES AWAY FROM HOW HE WAS ACTING TOWARDS ME YESTERDAY
I WONDER IF HE WAS MAKING A FOOL OF ME, AFTER ALL?
STILL, HE WAS BOLD
WHAT'S THAT OVER THERE?
THAT WOULD BE A HISTORIC SPOT.
IT SEEMS THAT IT WAS AN IRON SAND MINE.
I SEE. THE EIGHT ANCIENT PROVINCES ALONG THE JAPANESE SEA, AND THE PROVINCE IZUMO IN PARTICULAR, WERE SPOTS WHERE YOU COULD MINE IRON SAND OF GOOD QUALITY


IT'S NOT A STRETCH THAT THEY THOUGHT THAT HE HAD THE MAKINGS OF A RULER OVER THE IRON-PRODUCING NATIONS, JUST LIKE HIS NAME SAYS.
THE "SUSA" FROM SUSANOO, ONE OF IZUMO'S MAIN GODS, IS ALSO WRITTEN LIKE THE SUSA THAT STANDS FOR SANDBANK, WHICH MEANS IRON SAND IN ANCIENT JAPANESE
THE YAMATO DYNASTY WANTED TO RULE OVER THE IZUMO TRIBE. THERE'S A THEORY THAT THEY WANTED THE IRON SAND... OR RATHER, THE IRON SWORDS THAT WERE MADE OF IT.

OR, TO SUM IT UP, HOW THE UNCIVILIZED COUNTRIES AND NATIVE GODS THAT DIDN'T SUBMIT WERE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL BY THE DYNASTY AND HEAVENLY GODS
I'M GOING TO CALL IT...

I'M GOING TO STAGE A PLAY OF MY OWN "ALTERNATE KOJIKI,"
BASED ON ALL THESE DIFFERENT THEORIES.

ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONAL STORIES, THEY WEAKENED IZUMO'S POWER LITTLE BY LITTLE WITH CLEVER PLOTS.
THE BLOODSHED WASN'T AS GREAT AS IN KYUSHU OR EZO, BUT...

"YAKUMO TATSU!"
THAT'S THE FIRST POEM EVER WRITTEN IN JAPAN
HEY, YOU SHOULD BRUSH UP YOUR HISTORY
YA-KUMO ...?
WHAT'S THAT?

OH, WHAT A SPLENDID SIGHT IZUMO IS!

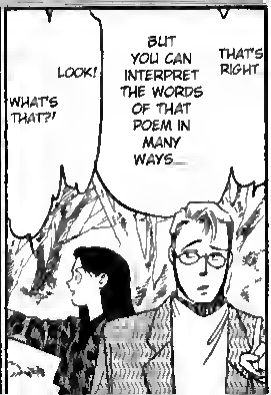
TO PROTECT MY WIFE SEVEN-FOLD, NO, EIGHT-FOLD CLOUDS

RISE UP AROUND OUR NEW HOME

IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'D BUILD AN EIGHT-FOLD FENCE JUST FOR US

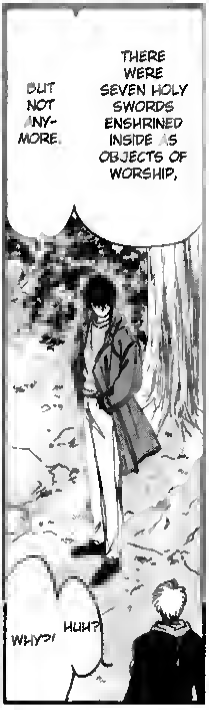
THAT'S THE POEM OF JOY WHICH THE GOD SUSANOO, WHO WAS BANISHED TO THE LAND OF ORIGIN OR BEGINNING, IZUMO, BECAUSE OF HIS ATROCITIES..
WROTE WHEN HE MARRIED PRINCESS KUSHI-NADA AFTER HE'D SLAIN THE SER-PENT YAMATA NO OROCHI.

NO ONE'S ALLOWED TO ENTER EXCEPT FOR CHIEF PRIESTS OF THE SHINTO SHRINE.
THAT'S THE PROHIBITED ZONE OF THE CHIGAESHI SHRINE
WE CAN'T ENTER NO MATTER WHAT?!
HEH!

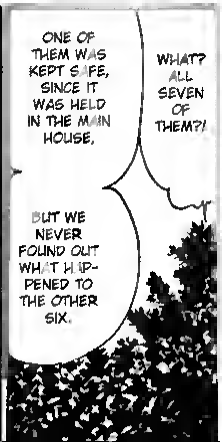


IS THERE SOMETHING ENSHRINED INSIDE?!
SO, YOU'RE GOING TO ENTER IT TONIGHT, THEN!
THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE SHAMANS ONLY ENTER IT DURING THE KANNAGI FESTIVAL IN ORDER TO HOLD THE RITUAL
FOR INSTANCE, A SHAMAN LIKE ME.

THEY WERE STOLEN BY SOMEONE DURING WORLD WAR TWO.

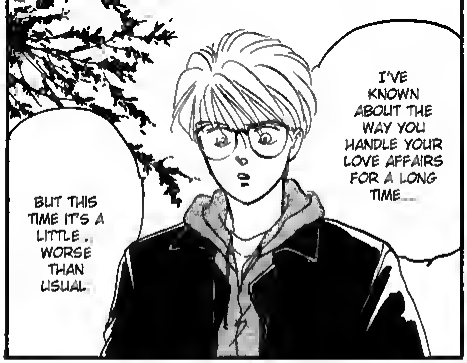

THERE WERE SEVEN HOLY SWORDS ENSHRINED INSIDE AS OBJECTS OF WORSHIP,
BUT NOT ANY-MORE.
HUH?
WHY?!

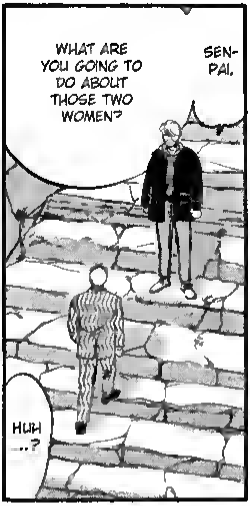
WHAT A TERRIBLE THING TO DO, STEALING OBJECTS OF WORSHIP.
PRESENTLY THERE'S A STATUE OF THE CHIGAESHI GOD SUSANOO ENSHRINED INSIDE.


ONE OF THEM WAS KEPT SAFE, SINCE IT WAS HELD IN THE MAIN HOUSE.
WHAT? ALL SEVEN OF THEM?!
BUT WE NEVER FOUND OUT WHAT HAP-PENED TO THE OTHER SIX.

CHIKA-CHAN,
KITANO-SAN IS GOING ON BUSINESS
YOU MUSTN'T DISTURB HIM
I WISH I COULD TAKE A LOOK AT IT. CAN I ASK YOUR FATHER ABOUT IT DIRECTLY?!
VERY WELL!
I'LL GO ASK HIM!
IF YOU WANT TO, GO AHEAD
AH, I'LL GO TOO, THEN!
IT'S THE SAME FOR ME.
IT'S RE-SEA-RCH
I'M GOING TO PLAY THE ROLE OF PRINCESS KUSHINADA, ANYWAY.
YOU ..
SHOULD READ THE KOJIKI FIRST INSTEAD.
I KNOW THE KOJIKI.
YOU ONLY KNOW THE TITLE.
HEY!
IF YOU WANT TO SAY SOMETHING, JUST SAY IT, YOU VENOMOUS SNAKE!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU!
CHIKA!
I'M SORRY
HE.. HEY,
I'M GOING BACK!
CHIKA..

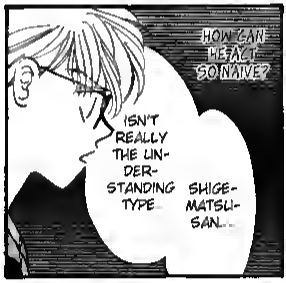
Silence
She has a fixed stare
she's
I'M... GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE WALK.
WE... WELL, I'LL GO THEN, TOO.
THEY'RE BOTH NOT QUITE THEMSELVES.
HA... HA, HA, HA. BEATS ME.
HEY, NANA-CHI!!
EMA-SENPAI, YOU STAY HERE, PLEASE.
I KNOW
THAT YOU SHOULDN'T MEDDLE IN PROBLEMS LIKE THESE, BUT...
GULP
KITANO-SENPAI!


I'VE KNOWN ABOUT THE WAY YOU HANDLE YOUR LOVE AFFAIRS FOR A LONG TIME...
BUT THIS TIME IT'S A LITTLE WORSE THAN USUAL.


SEN-PAI,
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THOSE TWO WOMEN?
HUH ...?

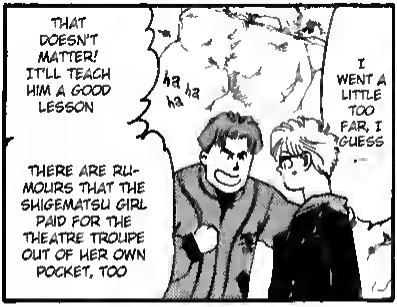
I AGREE THAT IT WASN'T A GOOD IDEA TO BRING BOTH OF THEM ALONG THIS TIME
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT HARUKO WOULD CAUSE THIS MUCH TROUBLE...
I TOLD HER FROM THE BE-GINNING THAT THEY BOTH WERE IMPOR-TANT TO ME.

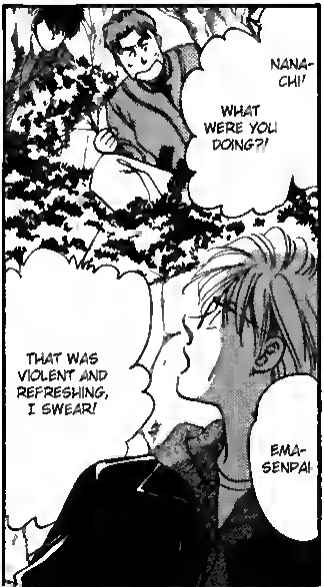
I'M NOT A MORAL-IST,
AND I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF YOU AS SOMEONE JUST STIR-RING UP GRIEF

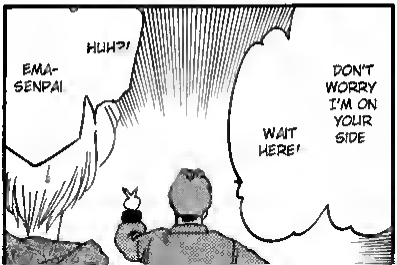

HOW CAN HE SAY IT SO NAIVE?
ISN'T REALLY THE UN-DER-STANDING TYPE...
SHIGE-MATSU-SAN...

I GUESS IT'S IM-POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO UN-DERSTAND ME.
I'M SURE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF A MORALIST LIKE YOU, IT LOOKS LIKE I'M JUST SOWING DIS-CONTENT.

IN THE END YOU'RE JUST A WANNABE WHO ALWAYS LOOKS AFTER HIMSELF...
BUT...
YOU'RE NOT THE PERSON WHOSE INTELLECT MAKES THEM STAND OUT,
BUT RATHER THE ONE WHO ADMIRES PEOPLE LIKE THAT, AREN'T YOU?
YOU...
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, OR WHAT?
GO COOL YOURSELF OFF...
HE SURE HAS A POINT...


THAT DOESN'T MATTER! IT'LL TEACH HIM A GOOD LESSON
HA HA HA
I WENT A LITTLE TOO FAR, I GUESS...
THERE ARE RUMOURS THAT THE SHIGEMATSU GIRL PAID FOR THE THEATRE TROUPE OUT OF HER OWN POCKET, TOO


NANACHI!
WHAT WERE YOU DOING?!
THAT WAS VIOLENT AND REFRESHING, I SWEAR!
EMA-SENPAI


HUH?!
EMA-SENPAI
WAIT HERE!
DON'T WORRY I'M ON YOUR SIDE

sudden attitude shift
THAT'S USELESS
IF YOU INJURE THE PRIDE OF A GUY LIKE HIM, HE'LL BEAR YOU A GRUDGE ALL HIS LIFE.
AND SINCE HE'S SOMEONE WHO'D NEVER LISTEN TO ANY CRITICISM, YOU ONLY MAKE A FOOL OF YOURSELF EVERY TIME YOU TRY TO GIVE HIM ADVICE.
N—NOW LISTEN, YOU! DO YOU HAVE A SPLIT PERSONALITY, OR WHAT?
MY BLOOD TYPE IS AB
WHY ARE YOU ONLY LIKE THIS TOWARDS ME? IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT, TELL KITANO-SAN!
WHY?
WHY..? SINCE HE'S THE BOSS
NO ONE WOULD LISTEN TO ME IF I TOLD THEM TO GO HOME.
THE BOSS?
THAT GUY?!
YES, YOU CAN SEE THAT, CAN'T YOU?
I'M AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOD CHAIN!

出雲狂騒曲 ③

翌日　達ちゃんと共に1日取材に出発する。

古い神社をしらみつぶしにまわってくれと注文する。

ついでに　民家っぽいのも撮りたい　などと言っていると　彼は我々をすっかり雑誌社の人間とカン違いして以前にカメラマンの何とかを載せた事があるんですよ〜〜〜〜〜〜としゃべりだす。

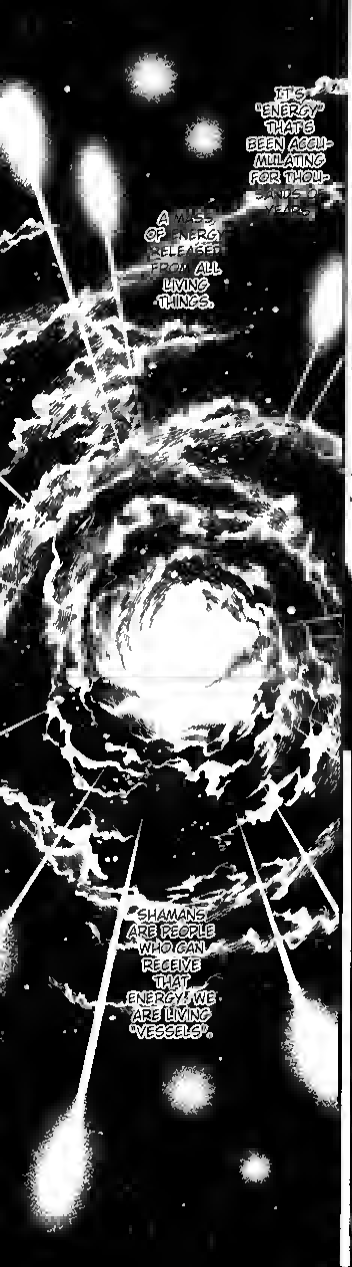
私の事はカメラマンとすっかり思い込んでいる。まあいいや　説明するのも面倒くさいしと放っておく。

そうこうするうちに神社に到着。

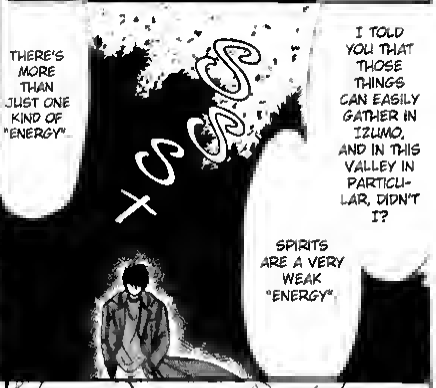
よーし　撮るぞーと私が取り出したのは「パノラマ写るんです」（これは端々まで撮れるし　結構鮮明なので重宝しているのだ）。

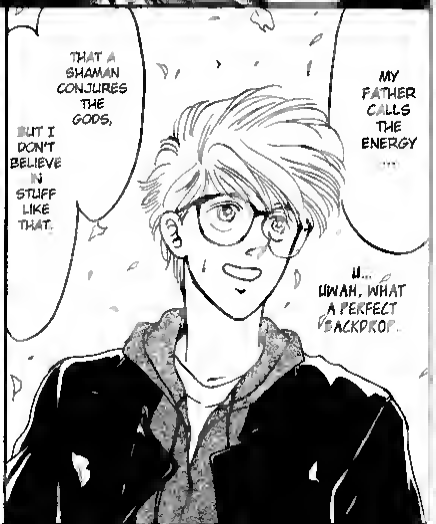
達ちゃんの　我々を見る目があやしくなったのは　言うまでもない。

WELL, IN THIS RESPECT, HE IS A CHILD AFTER ALL
SO IS THAT IT?
WERE YOU BEING HARSH WITH ME BECAUSE OF THAT?
THERE'S NO NEED TO SAY ANY MORE.
BECAUSE OF WHAT JUST HAPPENED, HE'LL SUGGEST GOING HOME, WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS
WHY DO YOU WANT US TO GO HOME SO BADLY?
IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE KANNAGI FESTIVAL
WE WON'T BE IN THE WAY.
SAY,
BUT YOU ARE.
THE TRUTH IS THAT THE "ENERGY" OF THE VALLEY IS DISTURBED.
ENERGY?
THE BOSS SHOULD DEAL WITH ALL THE COMPLAINTS, RIGHT?
IF YOU'RE NOBODY, I'M SORRY.
HE COULD HAVE SAID THAT A LITTLE NICER, TOO, COULDN'T HE? WHAT A SHARP TONGUE.
ARE YOU GOING TO TELL KITANO-SAN NEXT TIME?
SO?


IT'S "ENERGY" THAT'S BEEN ACCUMULATING FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.
A MASS OF ENERGY RELEASED FROM ALL LIVING THINGS.
SHAMANS ARE PEOPLE WHO CAN RECEIVE THAT ENERGY. WE ARE LIVING "VESSELS".

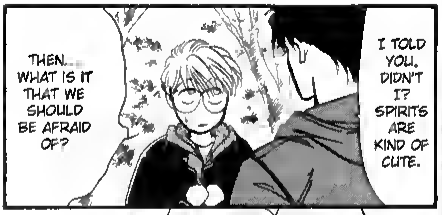
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING LIKE THAT. THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE THAT I SAW SPIRITS AS WELL!
HUH ...?
What do you mean by energy?
YOU SEEM TO BE A SEER, SO YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?


THERE'S MORE THAN JUST ONE KIND OF "ENERGY".
I TOLD YOU THAT THOSE THINGS CAN EASILY GATHER IN IZUMO, AND IN THIS VALLEY IN PARTICULAR, DIDN'T I?
SPIRITS ARE A VERY WEAK "ENERGY".


THAT A SHAMAN CONJURES THE GODS,
BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IN STUFF LIKE THAT.
MY FATHER CALLS THE ENERGY ...
U... UWAH. WHAT A PERFECT BACKDROP.

YOU COULD SAY WE'RE THE LIVING IZUMO
THE THE STORY TOOK A SURPRISING TURN
HE— HEH!
BUT— UNLIKE THE NATURALLY BORN "ENERGY"—
THE "EVIL ENERGY" BORN FROM PEOPLE'S DESIRES AND GRUDGES IS A PROBLEM.
SINCE THE NATURAL ENERGY ISN'T AS CRUEL AS PEOPLE'S DESIRES
SPIRITS THAT STILL RETAIN THE MEMORY OF THEIR DAYS AS HUMANS ARE KIND OF CUTE
KU— KURAKI-KUN,
I.. ISN'T IT GETTING COLDER?
QUIT IT..
WITH YOUR JOKES!
SURE IT IS.
SINCE THE SPIRITS ARE IN AN UPROAR.

WA...
WAAAH!?
KU, KURAKI-KUN, KURAKI-KUN, THERE'S SOMETHING HERE!
I TOLD YOU, IT'S THE SPIRITS, DIDN'T I?
THEN EXPEL THEM! YOU'RE AN EXORCIST, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT AM I A MONK?
GET LOST !!


I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I? SPIRITS ARE KIND OF CUTE.
THEN... WHAT IS IT THAT WE SHOULD BE AFRAID OF?

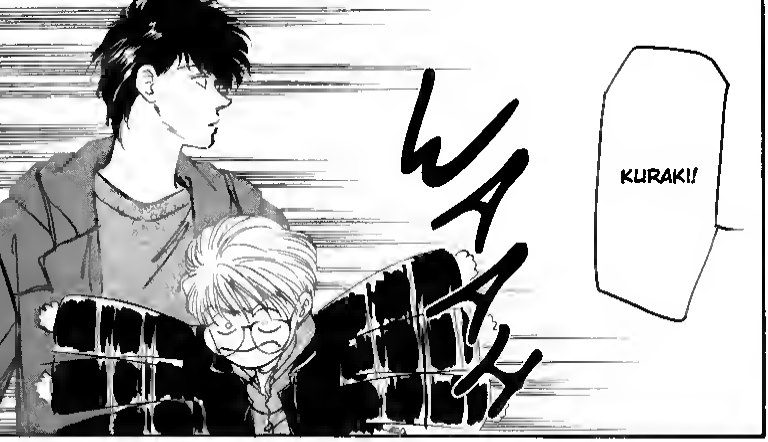
SILENCE
HUH?
LOOK
THEY'RE GONE
NO WAY...

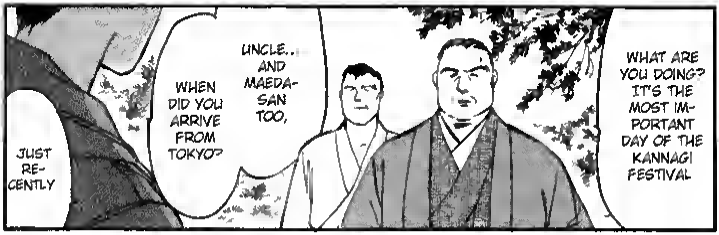
LIKE I SAID.
IT'S THE "EVIL ENERGY".
IT'S SOMETHING THAT'S PRODUCED BY PEOPLE'S DESIRES.
EVEN OVER THE YEARS, IT WASN'T ABLE TO ASSUME A SOLID FORM, AND IT REACHED A STATE VERY CLOSE TO THE NATURAL "ENERGY" AT SOME POINT

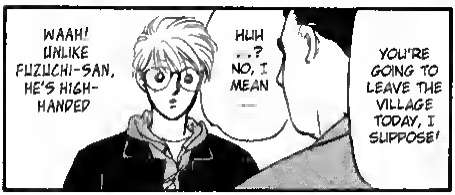
YOUR BODY WILL BE DESTROYED... AND YOUR SOUL WILL BE ENGULFED.

YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO RE-INCARNATE, AND YOUR SOUL WILL HAUNT THE WORLD FOR-EVER...

SO, ONCE IT HAS YOU IN ITS CLAWS, THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO BUT ASSIMILATE
IT'S ABSORBED PLENTY OF ENERGY FROM THE 1700 YEAR OLD CURSE
ESPE-CIALLY THE EVIL ENERGY HERE IN IFUYA...
AS-SIMI-LATE?


WAAA
KURAKI!


WHAT ARE YOU DOING? IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY OF THE KANNAGI FESTIVAL
UNCLE.. AND MAEDA-SAN TOO,
WHEN DID YOU ARRIVE FROM TOKYO?
JUST RECENTLY


YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE THE VILLAGE TODAY, I SUPPOSE!
HUH ..? NO, I MEAN
WAAH! UNLIKE FUZUCHI-SAN, HE'S HIGH-HANDED

AH.. GOOD MORNING.
YES
ARE YOU THE GUEST FROM TOKYO?!
WHAT IS MY BROTHER THINKING, HAVING YOU HERE ON A DAY LIKE THIS?

THAT WAS YOUR PLAN, RIGHT, NANACHI-SAN?
YE
YEAH
I GUESS SO

WELL, THEN, KURAKI, COME TO THE DOJO
TRY TO TAKE ON MAEDA, OUR ACTING MASTER.
I WANT TO SEE THE SKILLS THAT GOT YOU YOUR LICENSE FIRSTHAND
YES?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, YOUNG MASTER.
SINCE YOUR QUALITIES ARE NECESSARY FOR THE KANNAGI FESTIVAL.
EXCUSE ME!
excited
DOES THIS MEAN THEY'RE GOING TO PRACTICE WITH REAL SWORDS?!
CAN I WATCH TOO?!
HUH?
OH.
UM... IF YOU'D RATHER I NOT, IT'S OKAY, BUT...
HE CAN WATCH, RIGHT, UNCLE?
OH... SURE IF YOU DON'T MIND.
WELL, THEN...
I'LL GO... GET MYSELF READY.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'RE A GOOD FRIEND OF HIS SINCE YOU'RE GETTING ALONG SO WELL WITH THAT GRUMPY BOY

NO, I'M SORRY.

WHAT?

I'M IN MY THIRD YEAR OF COLLEGE ...

And on top of that I'll never think of looking for friends through the net

HUH?

ARE YOU A PENPAL OR SOMETHING?

EXCUSE ME, BUT YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE THE SAME AGE AS HIM. .

SINCE HE CLEARLY SEPARATES HIMSELF FROM EVERYBODY.

THAT'S RIGHT.

Even I'm scared

DOES THAT MEAN HE'S BEING FRIENDLY ..?

WONDERS NEVER END.

HE MUST LIKE YOU QUITE A LOT.

I feel like Toranosuke.

ha ha ha

RATTLE

WOAH, HOW IMFRESSIVE!

I WISH I HAD MY CAMERA ON ME.

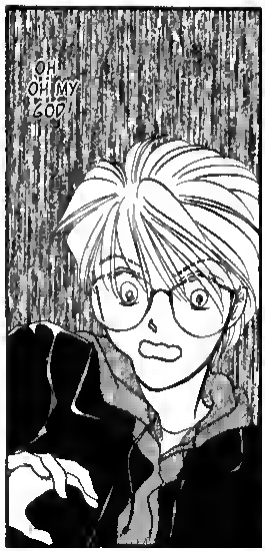
*Toranosuke is a character in a film featuring an amorally cruel samurai.

WAH, THAT LOOKS GOOD ON HIM!
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'M KNEELING?
Ah, my camera

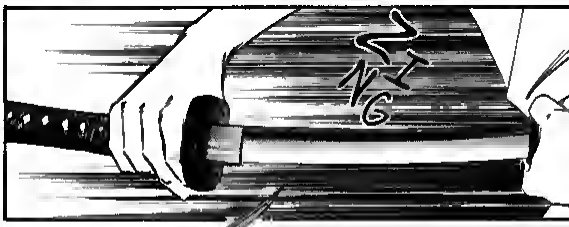
BUT
WITH JAPANESE CLOTHES ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOW HE LOOKED YESTERDAY AND NOW IS EVEN MORE OBVIOUS

I'M SURE HE WAS SOMEHOW POS-SESSED.
AND THE GUY RIGHT HERE ARE TWO TOTALLY DIFFERENT PEOPLE
THE SHRINE MAIDEN FROM YES-TERDAY

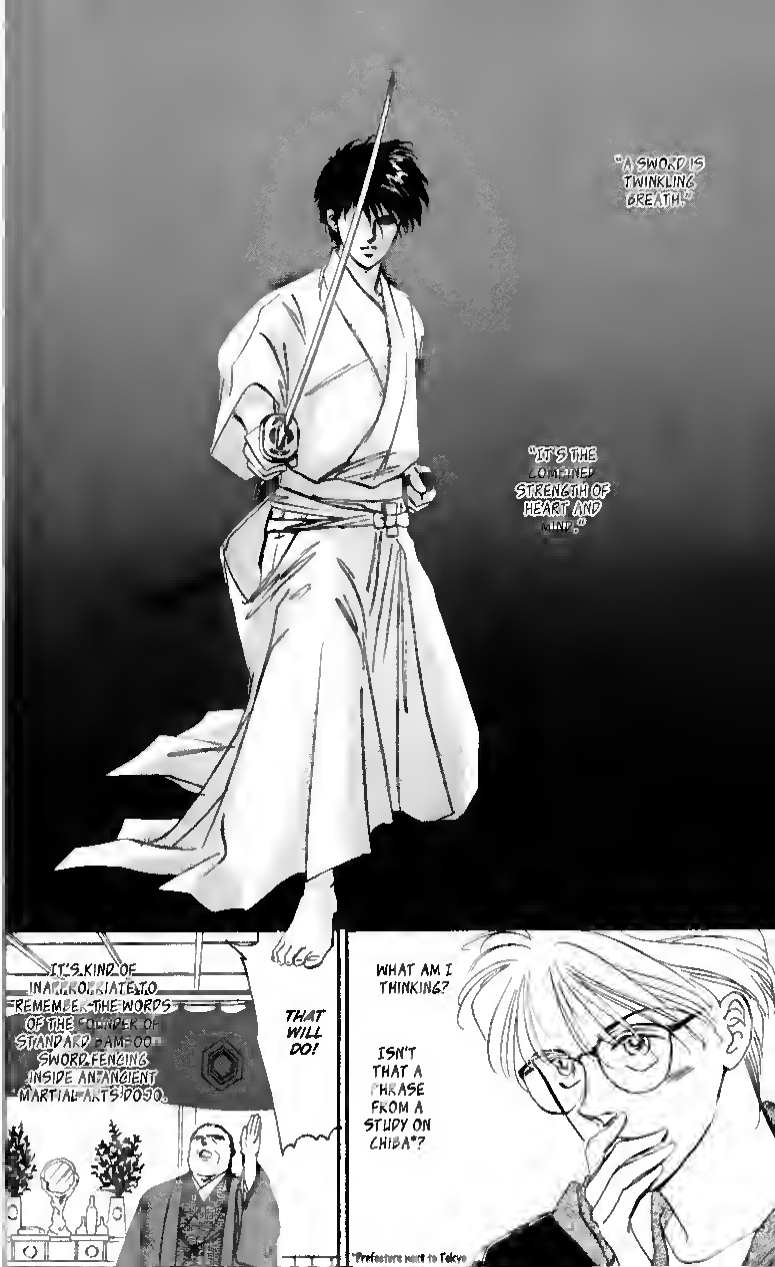
WAS HE LIKE THAT BECAUSE OF THAT HUMAN-SHAPED SHADOW...?
BUT THAT SHADOW GAVE ME A REALLY CREEPY FEELING... IS THAT THE "ENERGY" OF THE GODS?!
GO!
Hah!
U.... UWAH!
WA... WATCH OUT...
SFX: BYAAH



SFX STOP



I KNOW THAT THEY'RE FIGHTING ACCORDING TO REGULATIONS.
BUT STILL, IT... IT'S SCARY.
HOW ON EARTH...
CAN HE HANDLE SUCH A HEAVY SWORD THAT EASILY?
SFX: SWUSH
I'VE NEVER SEEN...
BUT IT'S AMAZING.
ANYTHING THIS BEAUTIFUL BEFORE.

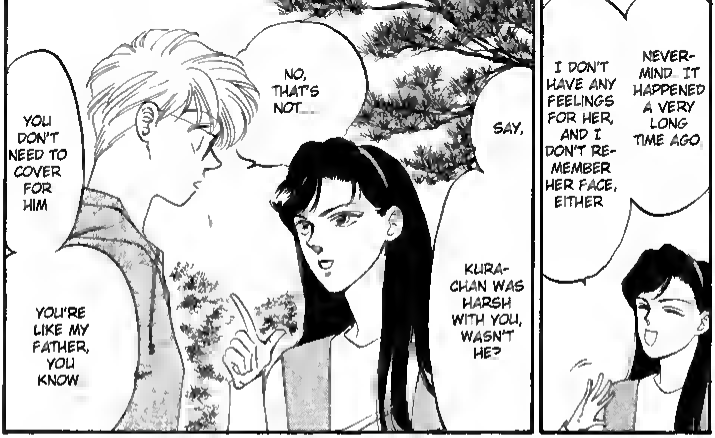

"A SWORD IS TWINKLING BREATH."
"IT'S THE [illegible] STRENGTH OF HEART AND MIND."
IT'S KIND OF INAPPROPRIATE TO REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE FOUNDER OF STANDARD KAN-OO SWORDFENCING INSIDE AN ANCIENT MARTIAL ARTS DOJO.
THAT WILL DO!
WHAT AM I THINKING?
ISN'T THAT A PHRASE FROM A STUDY ON CHIBA"?
*Prefecture next to Tokyo

THAT WAS BRILLIANT, KURAKI
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FULFIL YOUR TASK AT THE RITUAL TONIGHT
NOW I'M RELIEVED
BUT ..
SWISH
SOMEHOW IT FITS PERFECTLY
CLINK
WELL DONE, YOUNG MASTER
WELL, THEN
LISTEN KURAKI
DON'T LOSE YOUR PEACE OF MIND NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE ABLE TO BECOME THE NEXT HEAD OF THE FUZUCHI FAMILY
RITUAL ..?
BUT MY FATHER SAID MY DUTIES WERE FINISHED

KURAKI-KUN, KURAKI-KUN
THAT WAS AMAZ-ING.
My legs are trem-bling.
I'M REALLY IMPRESSED!
THAT ISN'T A REALLY SHARP SWORD, IS IT?
IT'S NOT LIKE WE FIGHT SERI-OUSLY.
BUT SOME-TIMES YOU GET GRAZED, DON'T YOU?
FIGHTS BETWEEN DOJOS ARE LEFT TO AD-VANCED FIGHT-ERS ONLY
WE MAKE BEGINNERS USE DULL PRACTICE SWORDS, SO THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT
YOU...
ARE IM-PRESSED BY THE MOST TRIVIAL THINGS, AREN'T YOU?
THEY LET ME WIELD A REAL SWORD FROM THE BEGIN-NING, THOUGH.
WHAT? HOW OLD WERE YOU BACK THEN?
FOUR OR FIVE, I GUESS.
AMAZ-ING!

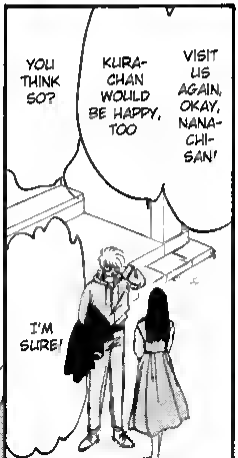
HURRY UP AND GO HOME!
I'M THE HEIR TO THE FUZUCHI SHINTO SCHOOL.
SO THAT'S A MATTER OF COURSE
I... I STILL THINK THAT IT'S AMAZING
CAN'T I ADMIRE YOU?
HE SMILED
A smile
HE'S MUCH MORE FRIENDLY THAN WHEN WE FIRST MET
I'M... KIND OF HAPPY ABOUT IT...
I FEEL LIKE A TEACHER WHO TAMED A REAL PROBLEM CHILD...
—A TEACHER...?
I'M STUDYING TO BECOME ONE
I WONDER IF THAT'S A GOOD IDEA

NANACHI-SAN!
ISN'T KURA-CHAN WITH YOU?
HE'S JUST ON HIS WAY TO THE MAIN HOUSE.
IT SEEMS KITANO-SAN WAS JUST SAYING GOOD-BYE.
HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR PLANS, AND ARE GOING HOME ALREADY?
AH, THAT'S GOOD.
OUR FATHER WANTS TO SEE HIM THERE.
OH, YEAH. IT SEEMS SO
IT TURNED OUT LIKE KURAKI-KUN SAID
IS IT THAT YOU CAN'T STAND STAYING HERE ANYMORE BE-CAUSE WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FESTIVAL AND ALL OUR RELATIVES HAVE COME?
MY FATHER IS SO BUSY... HE SAID HE WAS SORRY THAT HE COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF YOU MORE
HE'S A LOVING FATHER, ISN'T HE?
YES, WE LOST OUR MOTHER VERY EARLY ON, SO WE'RE VERY CLOSE TO HIM
KURA-CHAN, ES-PECIALLY
DID SHE PASS AWAY?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL!
HE WAS VERY KIND TO US.
THEY HAD A DIVORCE
OH...
I... I'M SORRY


NO, THAT'S NOT...
YOU DON'T NEED TO COVER FOR HIM
YOU'RE LIKE MY FATHER, YOU KNOW
SAY,
KURA-CHAN WAS HARSH WITH YOU, WASN'T HE?
NEVER-MIND. IT HAPPENED A VERY LONG TIME AGO.
I DON'T HAVE ANY FEELINGS FOR HER, AND I DON'T RE-MEMBER HER FACE, EITHER

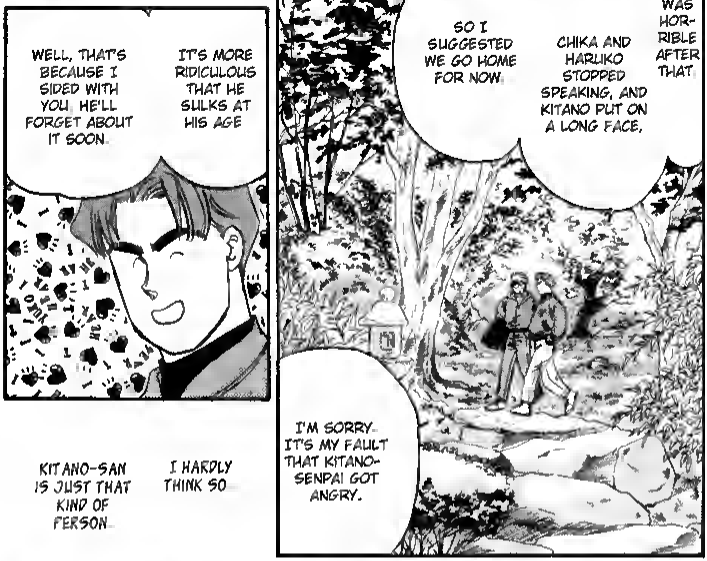
YOUR FATHER?!
aha aha
HE WAS PLAYING THE BABY.
HE WANTED YOUR ATTEN-TION, SO HE COULDN'T HELP BEING MEAN TO YOU, COULD HE?

BESIDES...
I LIKE YOU TOO!


VISIT US AGAIN, OKAY, NANA-CHI-SAN!
KURA-CHAN WOULD BE HAPPY, TOO
YOU THINK SO?
I'M SURE!

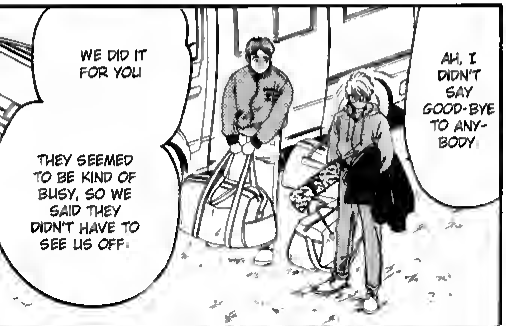
"PLAYING THE BABY..." THAT'S NOT THE IMPRES-SION I HAD...
SHARP
ehe ehe
HOW... HOW CHEER-FUL...

SEE YOU
hah!
BUT WAIT, IF SHE'S A THIRD YEAR, SHE'S SEVENTEEN OR EIGHTEEN THAT WOULD JUST BE THE RIGHT AGE
NO GOOD, NO GOOD ISN'T SHE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL? SHE'S A CHILD
NANA-CHI,
AH,
YOUR DAYS AS A GOOD GUY ARE OVER.
Emi-Senpai
That's a bad omen.
WHAT ARE YOU MUTTERING TO YOUR-SELF?
no but...
IT'S STILL TOO EARLY TO REJOICE MAYBE IT WAS SOME NORMAL CHATTER LIKE "NANACHI-KUN, YOU'RE SUPER NICE LET'S BE FRIENDS FOREVER "
shake shake
BUT STILL, IF SHE
WHAT!?
NO, IT'S NOTHING
And after you've been such a nice guy

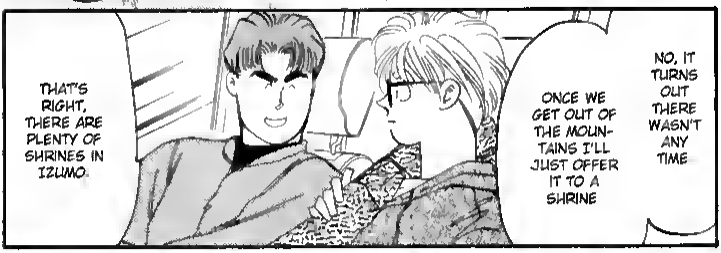

IT WAS HORRIBLE AFTER THAT.
CHIKA AND HARUKO STOPPED SPEAKING, AND KITANO PUT ON A LONG FACE.
SO I SUGGESTED WE GO HOME FOR NOW.
I'M SORRY. IT'S MY FAULT THAT KITANO-SENPAI GOT ANGRY.
IT'S MORE RIDICULOUS THAT HE SULKS AT HIS AGE
WELL, THAT'S BECAUSE I SIDED WITH YOU. HE'LL FORGET ABOUT IT SOON.
I HARDLY THINK SO.
KITANO-SAN IS JUST THAT KIND OF FERSON.

ARE WE GOING TO GO BACK TO TOKYO IN THIS AWKWARD ATMOSPHERE...?
Sulp
UWAH. THIS REALLY IS BEYOND ALL HOPE.

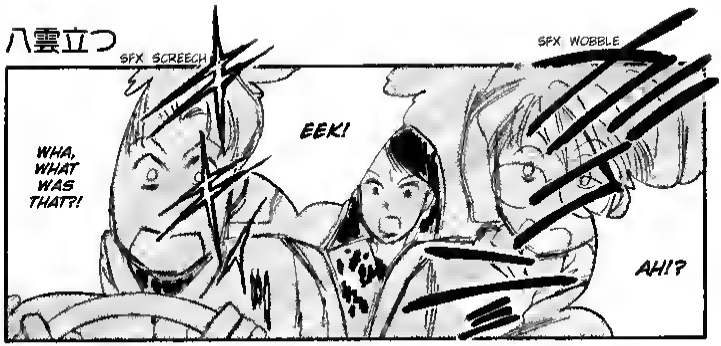
Silence

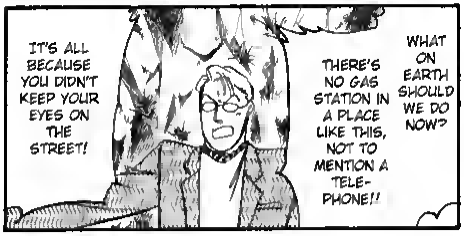

WE DID IT FOR YOU.
THEY SEEMED TO BE KIND OF BUSY, SO WE SAID THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE US OFF.
AH, I DIDN'T SAY GOOD-BYE TO ANYBODY.

I COULDN'T SAY GOOD-BYE TO KURAKI-KUN
NANA-CHI, LET'S GO.
OKAY.
AH.
NANACHI, THE SWORD!
YOU DIDN'T OFFER IT TO THEM.

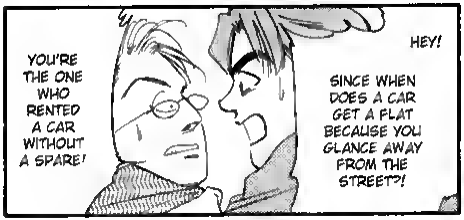

NO, IT TURNS OUT THERE WASN'T ANY TIME
ONCE WE GET OUT OF THE MOUN-TAINS I'LL JUST OFFER IT TO A SHRINE
THAT'S RIGHT, THERE ARE PLENTY OF SHRINES IN IZUMO.

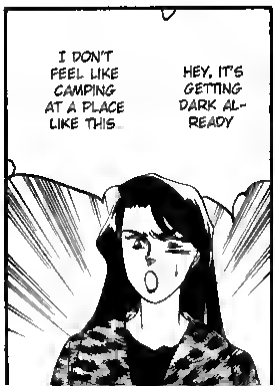
FOR-GET IT!
I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE THE LAST TRAIN BACK TO TOKYO TONIGHT, SO THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT.
HUH?
HEY, KITA-NO.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!


SFX SCREECH
SFX WOBBLE
WHA, WHAT WAS THAT?!
EEK!
AH!?


IT'S ALL BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE STREET!
THERE'S NO GAS STATION IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, NOT TO MENTION A TELE-PHONE!!
WHAT ON EARTH SHOULD WE DO NOW?

OH MAN, WE HAVE A FLAT
HOW ABOUT A SPARE TIRE?
WE DON'T HAVE ANY


HEY!
SINCE WHEN DOES A CAR GET A FLAT BECAUSE YOU GLANCE AWAY FROM THE STREET?!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO RENTED A CAR WITHOUT A SPARE!


I DON'T FEEL LIKE CAMPING AT A PLACE LIKE THIS
HEY, IT'S GETTING DARK AL-READY

PLEASE STOP IT, YOU TWO!

WE SHOULD GO ASK THEM FOR A SPARE TIRE! THERE'S NO USE STAYING OVER THERE ANYMORE!
WHAT? YOU WANT ME TO WALK FROM HERE?

HOWEVER YOU LOOK AT IT, A REPAIR SERVICE ISN'T COME THIS FAR INTO THE MOUNTAINS, EITHER.
CONSIDERING THE TIME, WE SHOULD GO BACK TO THE FUZUCHI'S, EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED, AND ASK TO STAY OVER AGAIN.

WHA-
THEN YOU CHANGE THE TIRE YOU CAN DO IT, CAN'T YOU?

I'LL GO!
YOU TWO SHOULD STAY HERE.

I CAN'T LET NANACHI GO ON HIS OWN, CAN I?
I'LL GO TOO

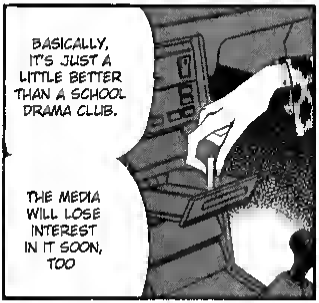
OKAY, I GET IT!
I'M GOING TO GET A SPARE TIRE,
AND I CAN CHANGE THE TIRE, TOO!

CAW
CAW
CAW
SIGH
HOW ABOUT THE THREE OF YOU GO?
THAT'S WHY I WANTED YOU TO WAIT HERE.
EMA-SENPAI!
I'VE HAD IT!
AAAH!
I HOPE NOT...
SEN-PAI.
BUT NOW WE'RE STUCK WITH THAT STUPID KITANO
IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T WANT TO GO
HE'S SOME LOSS
HEY,
SHIGE-MATSU-SAN...
THEY WON'T GET INTO A FIGHT, WILL THEY?
I'M WORRIED WHETHER IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO LEAVE THOSE TWO ALONE
WHAT IS IT?
YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, EITHER.

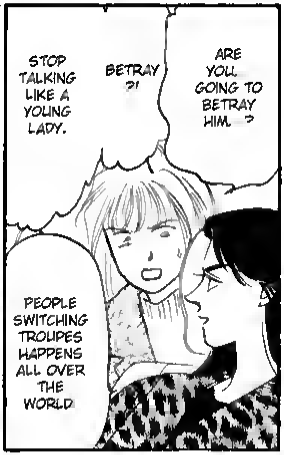
STOP ATTACKING ME.
I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT BEING IN THE SAME TROUPE AS YOU, EITHER
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN
NOW THAT I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY I'LL TELL YOU STRAIGHT OUT...
I TOLD YOU I'D SPEAK FRANKLY, RIGHT?
YOU WANT TO MARRY KITANO, DON'T YOU?
GO AHEAD I WON'T BE IN THE WAY.
FOR THE MOST PART, YOU'VE SHOULDERED THE TROUPE'S DEBT.
AND EVEN WHEN IT WAS PUT OUT FOR SALE, YOU WENT ALL OUT FOR KITANO AND HIS ARTISTIC AIRS.
THERE'S NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTES.
CHIKA-CHAN, BUT YOU ALSO...
HA, HA, HA! DON'T FORGET THAT I'M AN ACTRESS!
I'D DO ANYTHING TO GET A MAIN ROLE!
YOU CAN HAVE HIM! I'LL MAKE HIM A PRESENT FOR YOU!
I DON'T INTEND TO STAY IN THIS TROUPE FOR LONG, ANYWAY.

I'M NOT IN THIS WORLD FOR A WOMANIZER LIKE KITANO, YOU KNOW!
I WANT TO WORK AS AN ACTRESS AND I WANT TO BE IN THE LIMELIGHT!

WHAT DID YOU SAY ..?!


BASICALLY, IT'S JUST A LITTLE BETTER THAN A SCHOOL DRAMA CLUB.
THE MEDIA WILL LOSE INTEREST IN IT SOON, TOO

Tremble
Tremble
LET'S MAKE A GOOD JOB OF IT UNTIL THEN
WHEN I LEAVE I'LL GIVE HIM A PIECE OF MY MIND.
I'M SURE HE'LL HAVE A GOOD CRY ON YOUR SHOULDER.
IF YOU INSIST ON MARRYING THEN, IT'LL BE A BREEZE


STOP TALKING LIKE A YOUNG LADY.
BETRAY ?!
ARE YOU GOING TO BETRAY HIM. ?
PEOPLE SWITCHING TROUPES HAPPENS ALL OVER THE WORLD

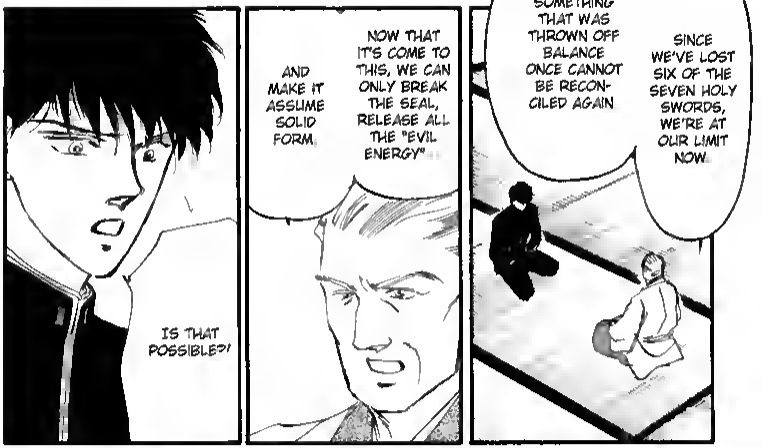
SO?
SOUNDS GOOD.
SWISH
THE "ENERGY"
rumble
rumble
rumble
WAS DISTURBED ?!

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
IT SEEMS THE "ENERGY" WAS JUST DISTURBED BADLY...
DIDN'T YOU NOTICE?
HM... I CAN'T SEE IT ANYMORE.

ONCE I BECOME A COMMON MAN AT THE SUCCESSION RITUAL...
I'LL LOSE THE ABILITY TO SEE EVEN MORE.
THIS FEELING OF LOSS I HAVE RIGHT NOW... I'M SURE IT'S THE SAME AS GOING BLIND.

THERE ARE SITUATIONS WHERE IT'S BETTER IF YOU CAN'T SEE, TOO.

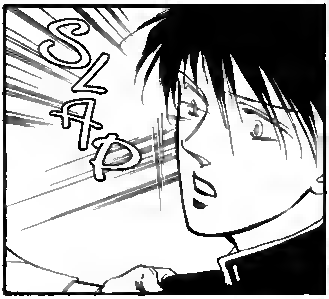
EVER SINCE THIS VALLEY WAS CURSED BY THE GOD SUSANOO 1700 YEARS AGO WE DID EVERYTHING WITHIN OUR POWER TO CALM THE AGGRAVATED SPIRITS, BUT
"FUTSU" IS AN ARCHAIC WORD WHICH MEANS "GIFTED WITH SPIRITUAL POWER FROM THE HEAVENS AND A KEEN SWORD" AND THE "CHI" STANDS FOR "FURIOUS DIVINE SPIRIT"
IN TRUTH, OUR NAME "FUTSUCHI"... IS WRITTEN WITH THE KANJI "FUTSU" FROM THE GOD FUTSUNUSHI...
AND THE "CHI" WHICH STANDS FOR "SPIRIT".
SO THERE ARE TIMES WHERE SOMEONE AS GIFTED AS YOU ENVIES COMMON MEN, I SUPPOSE.
IF YOU SAY SO, THEN THERE MUST BE SOME TRUTH IN IT.


SOMETHING THAT WAS THROWN OFF BALANCE ONCE CANNOT BE RECONCILED AGAIN
SINCE WE'VE LOST SIX OF THE SEVEN HOLY SWORDS, WE'RE AT OUR LIMIT NOW.
NOW THAT IT'S COME TO THIS, WE CAN ONLY BREAK THE SEAL, RELEASE ALL THE "EVIL ENERGY"
AND MAKE IT ASSUME SOLID FORM.
IS THAT POSSIBLE?!

I'M SURE THE SWORDS WHICH WERE CARRIED OUT OF THE PROHIBITED ZONE WILL RETURN TO MIKACHI-HIKO.
MAYBE THEY'RE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY BACK TO HIM.
WHO MADE THE HOLY SWORDS?
YOU MEAN THE MI-KACHI-HIKO...
TO DO SO, ALL OF THE HOLY SWORDS ARE IN-DISPENS-ABLE.
KURAKI, SEARCH FOR A DE-SCENDANT OF MIKACHI-HIKO!
I'M SURE THAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FIND HIM.
THAT YOU CAME INTO THIS WORLD AT THIS TIME WAS PROBABLY PROVI-DENCE, TOO.
AND WHAT'S MORE, THE SHAMAN AND THE SWORD SMITH...
HAVE ALWAYS SHARED AN UNBREAKABLE BOND.

BUT ...
AT THE SAME TIME, YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST YOURSELF.
SOMETIMES YOU CONJURE...
VERY WEAK "EVIL ENERGY", DON'T YOU?
WHAT ?!
IT MAKES YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE THAN THE "ENERGY" OF THE GODS.
AM I WRONG?!
FATHER ...
I...
BUT IF YOU GO ON LIKE THIS I'M SURE IT'LL BE YOUR RUIN!
WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IF THE HEAD OF THE FUZUCHI FAMILY HAS A WEAKNESS LIKE THAT?!
FATHER ...!!
PLEASE... CHOOSE YASUKO TO BECOME THE NEXT HEAD!!

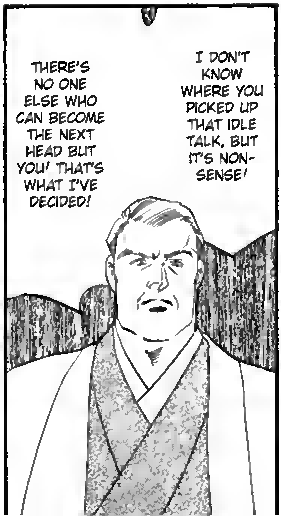
GROB
THAT HUSSY BEGOT ME SOMEWHERE ...


SLAP

SHE'S YOUR CHILD WITHOUT QUESTION,
BUT I'M NOT!

COME ON, STAND UP!
WHAT'S WITH THAT STUPID FACE?

FATHER ...!


I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU PICKED UP THAT IDLE TALK, BUT IT'S NONSENSE!
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE WHO CAN BECOME THE NEXT HEAD BUT YOU! THAT'S WHAT I'VE DECIDED!

DON'T CALL YOUR MOTHER A HUSSIE.
ONCE YOU'RE GROWN UP YOU'LL UNDERSTAND, TOO.
SHE JUST DIDN'T FIT HERE.

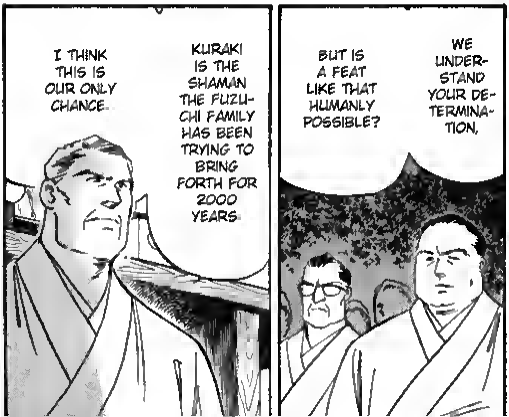
KURAKI!
OVERCOME THE EVIL INSIDE YOU!
UWAH! IT'S GOTTEN PITCH-DARK!
IS IT REALLY HERE?!
DON'T WORRY
IT SHOULD BE SHORTER TO THE FUZUCHI'S PLACE IF WE GO THROUGH THE CHIGAESHI SHRINE.

HEY!!
I WANTED TO ENTRUST IT TO FUZUCHI-SAN.
EVEN IF WE GET TO MATSUE, HE WON'T LET ME OFFER IT.
I SEE YOU'RE TROUBLED TOO.
Ha ha
THIS LOOKS HEAVY. WHY DID YOU TAKE IT ALONG?
WELL, KITANO-SAN'S THAT KIND OF PERSON.
LOOK, THOSE LIGHTS!
WHAT'S THAT, I WONDER!
I'M SURE
THAT THAT'S THE PROHIBITED ZONE
I SEE. IT'S THE RITUAL THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT.
IF WE FOLLOW THEM WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THE FESTIVAL!
WE CAN'T DO THAT. THEY TOLD US THAT NOBODY'S ALLOWED TO WATCH..
WHAT A STUPID TRADITION!
IF WE HIDE FROM THEM, THEY WON'T KNOW.
BU...
YOU'RE GETTING ON MY NERVES!
KITANO-SAN!
IF YOU'RE AFRAID, THEN WAIT HERE!

I'M WORRIED ABOUT THOSE TWO!
PLEASE DO THAT FOR ME
EMA-SENPAI, PLEASE GO BACK TO THE CAR FOR NOW!
I'M GOING TO STOP HIM!
THAT IDIOT.
WHAT DID HE GET ALL HYSTERICAL FOR?
WHAT?
pitch-black
I'M SUPPOSED TO GO BACK ON MY OWN?
OH NO!
WHERE DID HE GO?
OH MAN, I CAN'T SHOUT, EITHER.
THE WEATHER LOOKS THREATENING, TOO.
SSH
I HAVE TO MAKE HIM LISTEN TO ME.
NO MATTER WHAT...!
IT'S THE PROHIBITED ZONE.
DEAR GOD'S IT'S NOT MY FAULT
IT CAN'T BE HELPED
WHAT SHOULD I DO? I GUESS HE WENT FAST.
AH?!

CREATE A "PLACE" WHERE THE RELEASED ENERGY CAN GATHER, AND BRING THE CURSE UNDER CONTROL RESPECTFULLY.
NOW THAT THINGS HAVE COME TO THIS, WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE ALL THE "EVIL ENERGY" ASSUME SOLID FORM.
AS I SAID BEFORE, THE SEAL WHICH TEMPORARILY SUPPRESSED IT IS AT ITS LIMIT, TOO.

THEY'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RITUAL, I SUPPOSE
I HAVE TO QUICKLY FIND KITANO-SAN BEFORE THEY SEE ME..

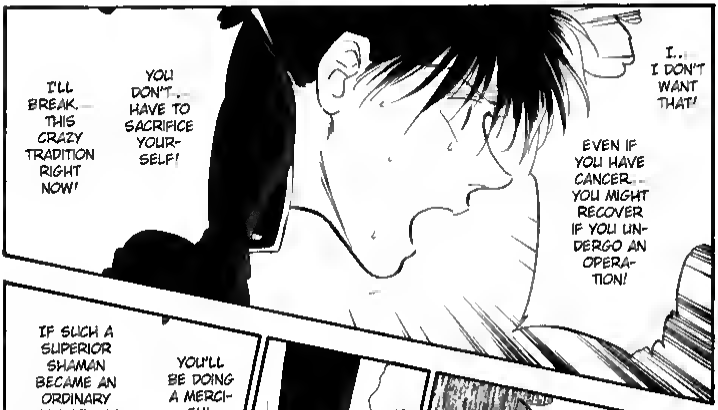

I THINK THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE.
KURAKI IS THE SHAMAN THE FUZUCHI FAMILY HAS BEEN TRYING TO BRING FORTH FOR 2000 YEARS.
BUT IS A FEAT LIKE THAT HUMANLY POSSIBLE?
WE UNDERSTAND YOUR DETERMINATION,

KURAKI, THIS IS THE TOKEN OF THE HEAD OF THE FUZUCHI FAMILY
THE HOLY SWORD "KAGU-TSUCHI"
TAKE IT.
IF YOU GO THIS FAR, WE WON'T HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS, EITHER
PLEASE DO AS YOU WISH.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I CAN'T GO BACK
VERY WELL
LET'S GO ON, THEN.
I HUMBLY ...
ACCEPT IT.
KURAKI, FROM THIS MOMENT ON YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THE FUZUCHI FAMILY.
TELL US ONCE WHAT THE ESSENCE OF A SHAMAN IS.
A SHAMAN ...
IS NEITHER A MAN NOR A WOMAN, NEITHER A HUMAN NOR A GOD. HE'S AN AVATAR OF IT ALL.

BUT THIS ISN'T ADMITTED TO MEMBERS OF THE HEAD FAMILY.
rumble rumble
IN THE FUZUCHI FAMILY SEVEN YEARS ARE EQUAL TO ONE YEAR AT THE AGE OF SEVEN, OR 49, WE BECOME MORTAL PERSONS
AND THEY AREN'T ALLOWED TO COMMIT SUICIDE BECAUSE OF THEIR FATE, EITHER.
THAT'S THE ONLY WAY HE CAN BECOME A "VESSEL" FOR THE GODS.
HE MUSTN'T BE ANYTHING THAT EXISTS ON EARTH
EXACTLY
HUH...?!
KURAKI, THIS IS YOUR FIRST TASK AS THE NEW HEAD
WITH THE SWORD "KAGUTSUCHI"
BY DECAPITATING ME...
RETURN MY LIFE TO THE HEAVENS

WHA...?
FATHER, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
YASUKO, BE SILENT!
THIS IS A RITUAL
STOP IT!
YOU'RE IN ON THIS TOO, UNCLE?!
THIS IS MY FATE NO FUZUCHI LIVES BEYOND FIFTY YEARS.
EVEN IF THERE IS A SMALL LAG, WE ARE ALL CONFRONTED WITH THE FATE OF A LIMITED LIFESPAN.
THE FACT IS...
THAT I HAVE CANCER
I WON'T LAST ANOTHER YEAR.
BUT BY LIVING THAT EXTRA YEAR I'D HAVE TO DIE AS A COMMON MAN

flap
flap
THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BECOME THE HEAD OF THE FUZUCHI FAMILY.
THE YEAR HE TURNED 49
AT THIS SAME PLACE, I DECAPITATED MY OWN FATHER, YOUR GRANDFATHER.


I'LL BREAK THIS CRAZY TRADITION RIGHT NOW!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF!
I... I DON'T WANT THAT!
EVEN IF YOU HAVE CANCER... YOU MIGHT RECOVER IF YOU UNDERGO AN OPERATION!

IF SUCH A SUPERIOR SHAMAN BECAME AN ORDINARY MAN, IT'D BE UNBEARABLE FOR HIM
YOU'LL BE DOING A MERCIFUL THING.
NO...
IF YOU WON'T DO IT, YASUKO WILL HAVE TO
KURAKI!
HE'D SUFFER HELL!
DO YOU WANT TO MAKE HIM SUFFER?!
BUT WILL SHE BE ABLE TO BEHEAD HIM WITH ONE STROKE?!

KURAKI!
NO...
NO!
I DON'T WANT THAT!
I CAN'T DO THAT!

花とゆめCOMICS

八雲立つ

樹なつみ 1

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八雲立つ〔1〕

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作品かいせつ

49年に一度だけ行われる秘祭、神和祭。その取材にアルバイトで参加することになった健生は、訪れた出雲の地で、巫子として舞っていた闇己と出会う。時を超えて呼びあう魂が、一本の飾太刀を介して結ばれる時、いにしえの闇に閃光が走る。歴史の渦の中、ふたりが見たのは!?

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IN SHAMANISM, A SHAMAN (OR MIKO, A DIVINE CHILD) IS A GO-BETWEEN FOR GODS AND HUMANS. IN RITUALS HE GOES INTO ECSTASIES AND BECOMES THE BEARER OF DIVINE MASSAGES. IN NOMADIC HUNTER TRIBES IN THE ASIAN INLAND HE'S REGARDED AS HIGHEST GOD. THERE ARE SHAMANIC RITUALS IN ORDER TO ASK THE WILL OF THE HIGHEST HEAVENLY GODS. IT OFTEN HAPPENS THAT SHAMANS ARE MISTAKEN FOR MEDICINE MEN, BUT THEY'RE DIFFERENT IN CHARACTER, TO BE EXACT. A MEDICINE MAN IS A RELIGIOUS BEARER WHEREAS A SHAMAN RATHER IS A PERSON THROUGH WHOM THE GODS SPEAK

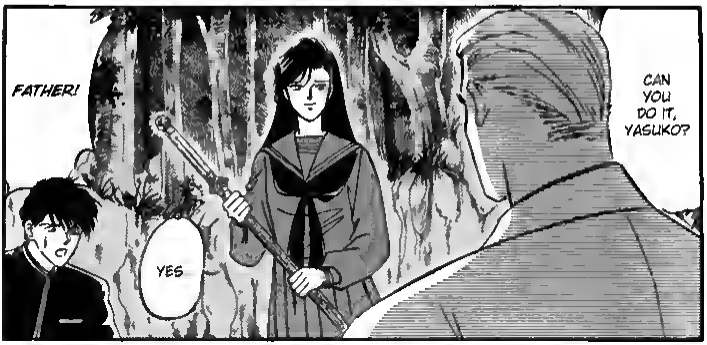
"EAST ASIAN CULTURES IN ANTIQUITY"

SMITHS AND SHAMANS COME FROM THE SAME NEST." A SAYING OF THE YAKUTS, TURKIC PEOPLE IN RUSSIA, GOES. "THE WIFE OF A SHAMAN HAS TO RESPECT HER HUSBAND, THE WIFE OF A SMITH HAS TO ADMIRE HER HUSBAND." ANOTHER SAYING GOES AND A THIRD SAYING GOES, "THE FIRST SMITH, THE FIRST SHAMAN, AND THE FIRST POTTER WERE BLOOD BROTHERS." THE SMITH IS THE FIRST-BORN, THE SHAMAN THE MIDDLE-BORN. THIS EXPLAINS WHY THE SHAMAN CAN'T CAUSE THE DEATH OF THE SMITH." ACCORDING TO THE DOLGANS, TURKIC PEOPLE IN NORTH RUSSIA, A SHAMAN CAN'T DEVOUR THE SMITH'S SOUL BECAUSE THE POTTER PROTECTS IT WITH FIRE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SMITH WIN THE SHAMAN'S (SOUL AND BURN IT (OMISSION) ACCORDING TO ANOTHER TRADITION, AN ANCESTOR OF THE YAKUTS WAS THE FIRST SMITH (OMISSION) THE SMITH OF THE NINTH GENERATION WILL HAVE THE SPIRITUAL POWER TO DO AS HE PLEASES. HE CAN DARE TO FORGE THE IRON ARTICLES OF A SHAMAN'S COSTUME WITHOUT BEING AFRAID OF SPIRITS. (THIS IS BECAUSE EVIL SPIRITS SHRINK FROM THE SOUND OF IRON BEING STRUCK.)

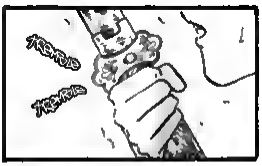
"SMITHS AND ALCHEMISTS" (THE FORGE AND THE CRUCIBLE) BY MIRCEA ELIADE
(ROMANIAN THEOLOGIST, 1907-1986)

FA, FATHER
ARE YOU GOING TO LET ME DIE AS A COMMON MAN, KURAKI?!
I'LL DO IT!!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, ISN'T IT?
SNAP
YASUKO!
GIVE IT TO ME, KURA-CHAN!!

YASUKO, WHAT ARE YOU...?
FATHER'S DECISIONS ARE IRREVOCABLE
YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?!
YASU-KO...
I KNOW THAT!!
ACTUALLY, KURA-CHAN DOESN'T WANT TO.
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE CAN'T SUCCEED!
IF YOU DO THAT, KURAKI WILL LOSE HIS RIGHT TO BECOME THE NEXT HEAD, YASUKO!
THIS IS ALSO A TEST OF WHETHER HE CAN SUCCEED!
KU-RAKI,
YOU WON'T DO IT, NO MATTER WHAT?
SIGH
THERE'S NO HELPING IT, THEN.


FATHER!
YES
CAN YOU DO IT, YASUKO?

HIGH
YA-SUKO !!


TREMBLE
TREMBLE

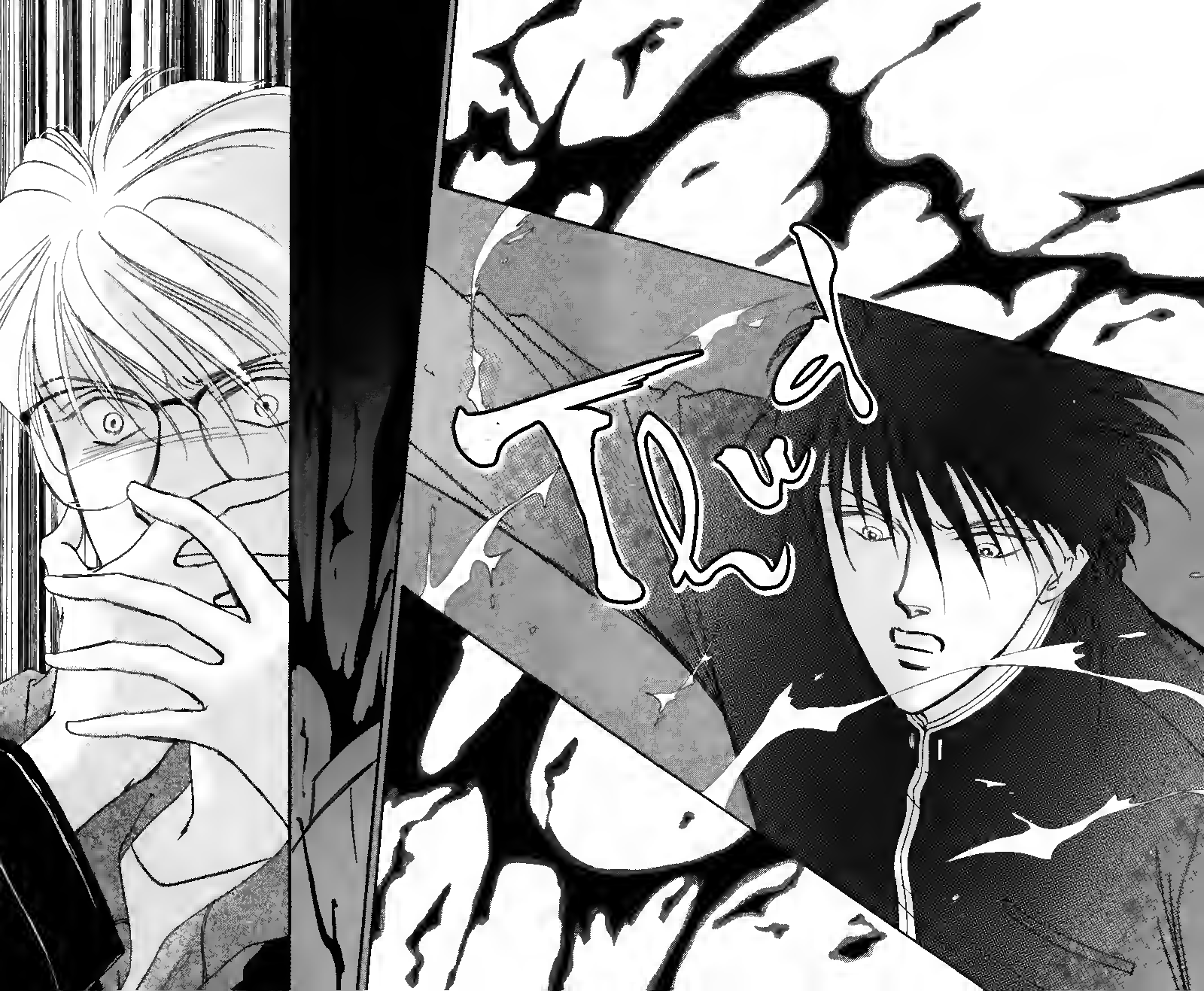
YA...

FATHER...!

I WON'T MAKE YOU SUFFER, FATHER... SO DON'T WORRY!
I WILL DO MY BEST
THANK YOU

YASUKO!
GIVE IT TO ME!!
FX. ZING
UH...

KURAKI! DON'T EVER FORGET!
AAAAH!


ไม่

KYAAAA!
YASU-KO!
RUSTLE
AH—
AAH!
WHO'S THERE?!
OVER THERE!
KITANO-SAN!

出雲狂騒曲 ④

結局1日神社めぐりをしながら紅葉を楽しみ 遼ちゃんともすっかり仲良くなり（おかげで安くしてもらった）。

夜は 大露天風呂でのぼせたりなんかして結構有意義な取材旅行であった。

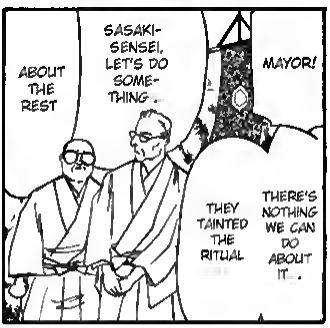
豊穣が全くない為か期待していた豊写真は撮れなかったが 資料写真はバッチリで 作品を描く上で大いに役立った。

一生分の神社・仏閣を1日で見たと いささかめげちゃってたN氏には気の毒だったけどね。

しかし 帰路 空から大阪のきらびやかな夜景を見てホッとするあたり 我々はやはり都会っ子だのぉと実感したのであった。

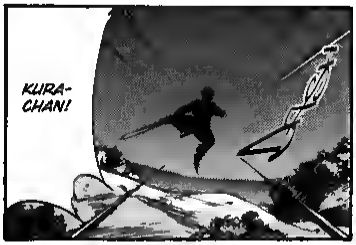
NONE OF THEM MUST LEAVE THIS VILLAGE ALIVE!
OUTSIDERS ARE EQUALLY PUNISHABLE.
THAT'S AN ORDER FROM OUR HEAD!
D... DIDN'T YOU HEAR?
WHOEVER TAINTS THE RITUAL PAYS FOR IT WITH HIS LIFE
THAT'S OUR LAW, ISN'T IT...?

WE SHOULD SETTLE THE MATTER BEFORE MORNING.
THE RAIN WILL WASH EVERYTHING AWAY.
LOOK, THUNDERCLOUDS
RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE


ABOUT THE REST
SASAKI-SENSEI, LET'S DO SOMETHING.
MAYOR!
THEY TAINTED THE RITUAL
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT...

YASU-KO,
I AM ALREADY A MURDE-RER.

DO YOU WANT TO KILL SOME-ONE WHO HAS NOT-HING TO DO WITH THIS?!
KURA-CHAN! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE OTHER ONE
SEARCH AMONG THE HILLS FOR THE GUY THAT RAN AWAY OVER THERE AND CATCH HIM.


KURA-CHAN!

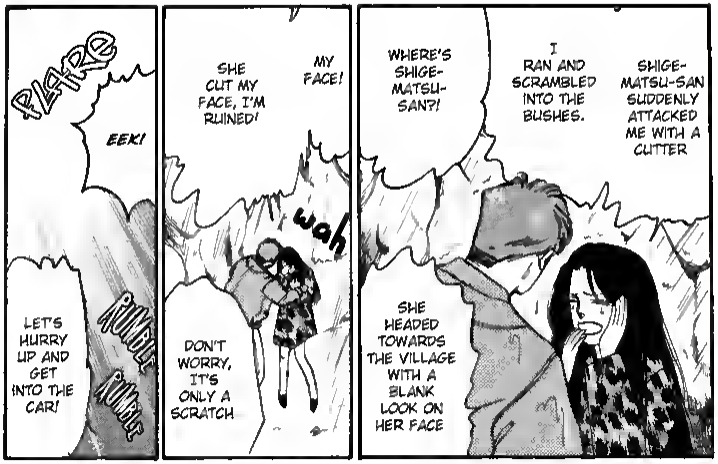
SAVE KURA-CHAN!!

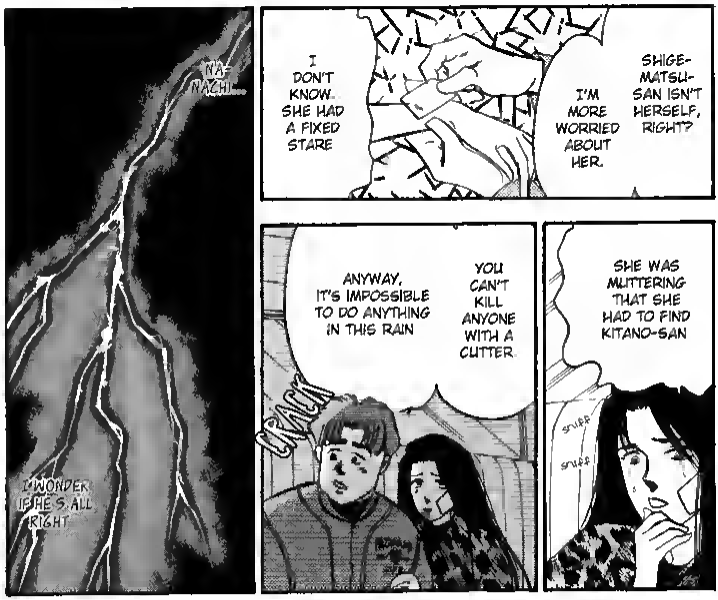
HELP ME !!
FATHER ..!!

YASU-KO,
UNCLE STOP KURA-CHAN!
HE ISN'T HIMSELF!

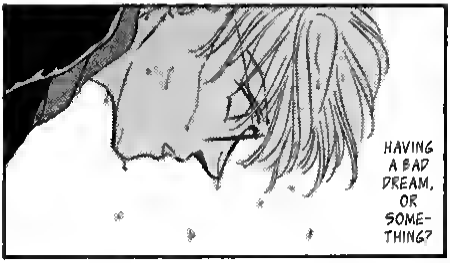
BUT...!!
KURAKI IS OUR HEAD NOW.
SSHH
NEITHER HIS FAMILY NOR ANYONE IN THE VILLAGE CAN DEFY HIM.

WHY AREN'T THEY HERE?
sshh
I'M BA...
HUH?!
SSHH
AAH!
IT'S REALLY COMING DOWN OH MAN!
THIS IS...
Are they making fun of me?
BLOOD
THIS... RED STAIN...
HUH...?
E...
EMA-KUN...
RUST LE
EMA-KUN
CHIKA-CHAN!
SHIGE-MATSU-SAN!
CHIKA-CHAN!
ARE YOU THERE?!


FLASH
EEK!
LET'S HURRY UP AND GET INTO THE CAR!
RUMBLE RUMBLE
SHE CUT MY FACE, I'M RUINED!
MY FACE!
WAH
DON'T WORRY, IT'S ONLY A SCRATCH
WHERE'S SHIGE-MATSU-SAN?!
I RAN AND SCRAMBLED INTO THE BUSHES.
SHIGE-MATSU-SAN SUDDENLY ATTACKED ME WITH A CUTTER
SHE HEADED TOWARDS THE VILLAGE WITH A BLANK LOOK ON HER FACE


NA-NACHI...
I WONDER IF HE'S ALL RIGHT
I DON'T KNOW. SHE HAD A FIXED STARE
I'M MORE WORRIED ABOUT HER.
SHIGE-MATSU-SAN ISN'T HERSELF, RIGHT?
ANYWAY, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DO ANYTHING IN THIS RAIN
YOU CAN'T KILL ANYONE WITH A CUTTER
CRACK!
SHE WAS MUTTERING THAT SHE HAD TO FIND KITANO-SAN
SNIFF
SNIFF

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
LAH
LAH
LAH
LAH
LAH


HAVING A BAD DREAM, OR SOME-THING?

AM I...
HAH
UH...
HA!
HAH!

IT WAS ALMOST A JOKE
THE WAY FUZULAW-SAN'S HEAD FLEW OFF.

KURAKI-KUN...
IT WAS YOUR OWN FATHER...
UH... UGH!
HOW COULD SOMEONE JUST DO THAT...?
WHAT ON EARTH AM I SUPPOSED TO...?
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?!
eRAL
F

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
UH...
WAH!
SWOOSH

SSHH
YOU TAINTED THE RITUAL.
STO... STOP IT!
SFX. Whank
CALM DOWN!
KU... KURAKI-KUN!
YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR THAT WITH YOUR LIFE
GRIP
DON'T WORRY.
IF I KILL YOU WITH THIS HOLY SWORD, YOU WON'T BECOME "EVIL ENERGY".
I'LL SEND YOU TO THE NEXT WORLD

AH...
HE'S SERIOUS
HE REALLY...
WANTS TO KILL ME!

WHACK
AAH!
AAH!
UH...
GRUMBLE
!

clank
WAH!
IF YOU RUN, YOU'LL ONLY SUFFER.
KURAKI-KUN!
KU...

WHA... WHAT ..?!
TURN YOURSELF IN!!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S SUFFERING BECAUSE YOU KILLED YOUR FATHER!
IT'S SO PAINFUL THAT YOU'RE AT A LOSS WHAT TO DO, RIGHT?
WHA... WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW IS NOTHING BUT TORTURING YOURSELF!

IF YOU TURN YOURSELF IN...
I DON'T THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE THE PAIN, BUT...
HA...
HA HA HA HA!!
YOU FOOL!
TURN MYSELF IN, YOU SAID?!
MAKE THINGS A LITTLE EASIER FOR YOU!
IT... IT WILL...
AH!
SCCS
COME ON, RUN AWAY!!
I'LL KILL YOU BY INCHES, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT!!
KURA...

RUN!
SLASH
UH!
AH...
OR DO YOU WANT ME TO KILL YOU RIGHT HERE?!
THERE'S THAT SHADOW
THAT SHADOW
AGAIN ...!

RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE
HOW UNLUCKY...
HE HAS THE GODS ON HIS SIDE, I'M AFRAID.
I... MIGHT DIE OF A HEART ATTACK...
UH...
BUT BEFORE HE, UTS ME TO THE SWORD
THUD
IT'S A DEAD END..!!
DASH
DASH

YOU FINISHED ALREADY?
HUNTING YOU ISN'T A CHALLENGE!
grab

KAGUTSUCHI
PLEASE WAIT A MINUTE
I... FEEL SICK
HA HA
SOON YOU'LL BE AT PEACE.
IT'S AMAZING... SO BEAUTIFUL
KU...
Grace

GRASP
DON'T MAKE THINGS EVEN WORSE ...
YOU...!
KU-RAKI-KUN...
STOP IT... ALREADY ...
AAH!
JERK
DON'T EVER TELL ME WHAT TO DO AGAIN!
I'LL... SILENCE YOU!!

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
KURAKI!!
KURAKI!!!
OVERCOME THE EVIL INSIDE YOU!
UH...
THE EVIL...

AAAAH!
INSIDE YOU!
SFX: whaak
...AH...

AAAAH!
AH...
AH...
SWH
WHY.
THAT'S SO CRUEL
...FATHER...

SPLOSH
THAT ...
CAN'T BE...
FATHER ...!!
COME BACK ...
COME BACK TO ME...!
I SEE YOU.
KURA-KI-KUN...

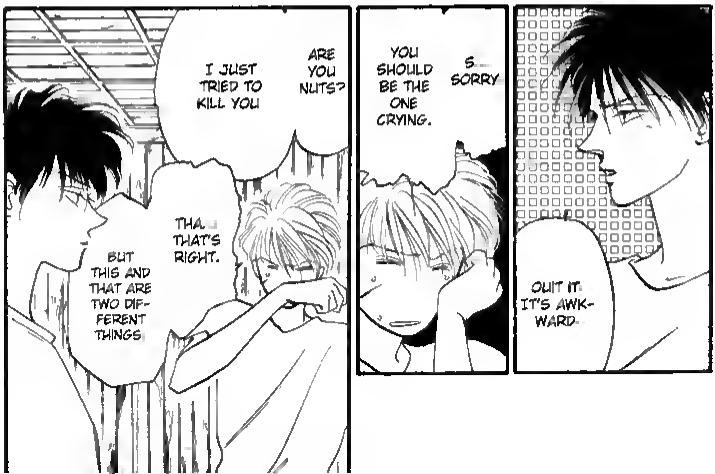
KURAKI-KUN,
YOUR FATHER UNDERSTANDS YOU!
IT ISN'T YOUR FAULT!
YOU'RE NOT TO BLAME!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT...!
THE FAULT—
LAY WITH HIM—
WE BOTH KNEW THAT, BUT
I JUST HAD TO SAY IT LIKE THAT

OW...
IS IT DEEP?
NO, NOT AT ALL
IT ALREADY STOPPED BLEEDING.
Ha ha ha
It hurts though.
HE KNOWS THE GRAVITY OF HIS GUILT MORE THAN ANYONE.
"I FELT THAT SOMEONE HAD TO SAY THAT...
EVEN IF IT WAS NOTHING BUT COLD COMFORT FOR HIM NOW...
SOME ONE BURST INTO TEARS
OVERWHELMED WITH GRIEF
THIS MIGHT ... WAS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN ...

"A GOOD SWORD IS SHEATHED."
HUH?
SO, IN A WAY, KURAKI-KUN WASN'T SERIOUS, AFTER ALL...
THAT I ONLY GOT A SCRATCH WHEN HE HIT ME WITH THAT BIG SWORD
IT'S A WONDER
SEEING IT CLOSE UP... IT REALLY IS HELLISHLY SHARP
THAT'S A LINE FROM AN OLD MOVIE
I'M A SHINY DRAWN SWORD WITHOUT A SCABBARD
WHOEVER TOUCHES ME CARELESSLY WILL GET HURT
MY FATHER...
WAS MY SCAB-BARD
I WANTED TO STAY INSIDE MY SCABBARD AND ENDURE ANYTHING IF THAT WOULD HAVE MADE HIM HAPPY

I...
AM NOT MY FATHER'S SON.
WHAT?
MY MOTHER GOT PREGNANT WITH ME WHEN SHE RAN OFF
I DON'T KNOW WHO MY REAL FATHER IS
MY MOTHER COMES FROM BRANCH OF THE FUZUCHI FAMILY. SHE AND MY FATHER ARE COUSINS.
THEY WERE ENGAGED EVER SINCE THEY WERE BORN...
BUT MY REBELLIOUS MOTHER HATED THAT. AND SHE LEFT MY FATHER AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO YASUKO.
IN THE END, SHE LANDED HIM WITH ME AND PAPERS OF DIVORCE.
MY FATHER WAS GOOD-NATURED.
SO HE COULDN'T REFUSE THE WOMAN HE LOVED.
BUT
HE NEVER TREATED ME COLDLY.
I CAN FEEL IF SOMEONE HATES ME
HE NEVER TREATED ME ANY DIFFERENTLY THAN YASUKO, HIS OWN DAUGHTER
THEY SAY...
MY MOTHER WASN'T SURE WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE ME.

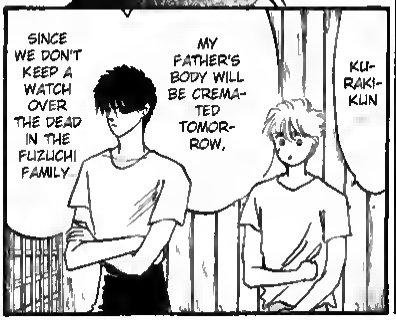
KU...
KURAKI-KUN...
IF SHE'D HAD AN ABORTI-ON
I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO KILL MY FATHER
SHE WAS SO STUPID.
I.. FEEL SO SORRY FOR YOU..
I.. I'M SORRY I COULDN'T STIFLE IT
STOP CRYING


I JUST TRIED TO KILL YOU
ARE YOU NUTS?
BUT THIS AND THAT ARE TWO DIF-FERENT THINGS
THA.. THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU SHOULD BE THE ONE CRYING.
S.. SORRY
QUIT IT. IT'S AWK-WARD.

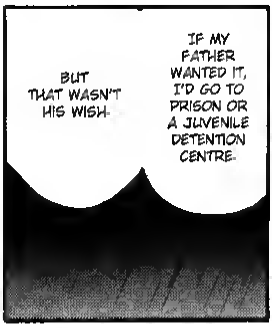
I'M CALCULATING, ILL-NATURED
AND SNEAKY
I DON'T CARE NO MATTER WHAT BAD THINGS MAY HAPPEN.
THAT'S HOW I AM.
I... TOOK AFTER MY MOTHER.
YOU'RE A GOOD-NATURED FOOL.
YOU'RE THE SAME KIND OF PERSON AS MY FATHER, I SWEAR.
YE...
YES.
THE SHADOW BEHIND ME.
YOU SAW IT, DIDN'T YOU?
IT WAS FUN TO LISTEN TO THEIR CURSES
THOSE GUYS ARE WILD ABOUT ME, I GUESS.
WHICH ALMOST TURNED INTO "EVIL ENERGY"
THAT'S A DEMON...
AS LONG AS THEY AREN'T "EVIL ENERGY", THEY'RE EASY TO CONTROL.
I CONJURED DEMONS ONCE IN A WHILE AND PLAYED WITH THEM.

YOU SHOULDN'T ASSOCIATE WITH DEMONS!
THAT'S RIGHT!
MY FATHER SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME...
AND TOLD ME TO OVER-COME MYSELF

I WON'T TURN MYSELF IN.
YOU... CAN REPORT ME TO THE POLICE


SINCE WE DON'T KEEP A WATCH OVER THE DEAD IN THE FUZUICHI FAMILY.
MY FATHER'S BODY WILL BE CREMA-TED TOMOR-ROW.
KU-RAKI-KUN

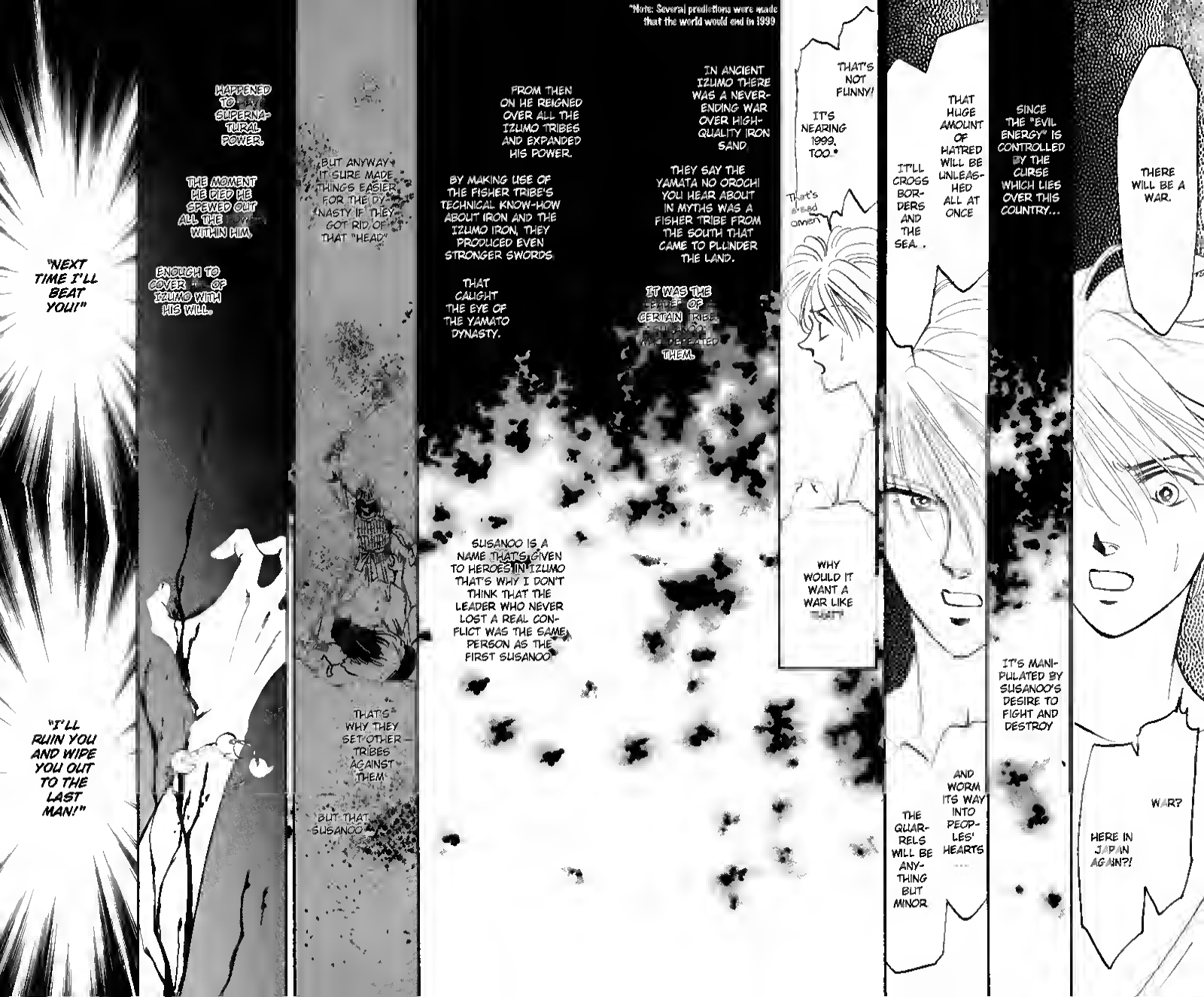
IF THE RIGHT SHAMAN OF THE FUZUICHI FAMILY IS "GOOD"...
THEN I'M A "BAD" SHA-MAN.

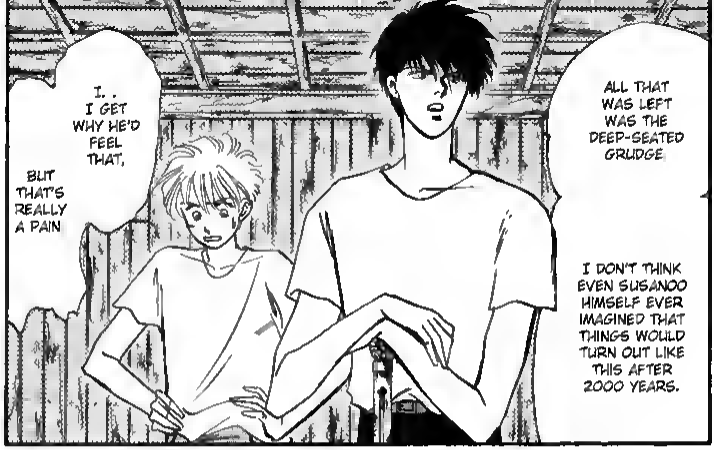

BUT THAT WASN'T HIS WISH.
IF MY FATHER WANTED IT, I'D GO TO PRISON OR A JUVENILE DETENTION CENTRE.

DO YOU THINK...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT?

THAT'S THE WAY IT IS HERE.
EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE WILL TELL THE SAME STORY.

IN ORDER TO LET 2000 YEARS' WORTH OF "EVIL ENERGY" ASSUME SOLID FORM, I HAVE TO CONJURE AN EVEN BIGGER AMOUNT OF "GOOD ENERGY".
BUT THAT'S ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME ALONE.
HE WANTED ME TO BRING BACK THE SIX STOLEN HOLY SWORDS...
AND TO BREAK THE CURSE OVER THE COUNTRY.
AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, ALL OF THE HOLY SWORDS TO STRENGTHEN OUR POWERS.
FOR THAT I NEED THE AID OF A FEW SHAMANS...
BEFORE THE BARRIER FALLS.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME ...
AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT DOES?
"KAGUTSU-CHI" ALONE MAINTAINED THE BARRIER FOR THE LAST 40 OR 50 YEARS.
BUT IT'S GROWING WEAKER AND WON'T STAND A CHANCE.

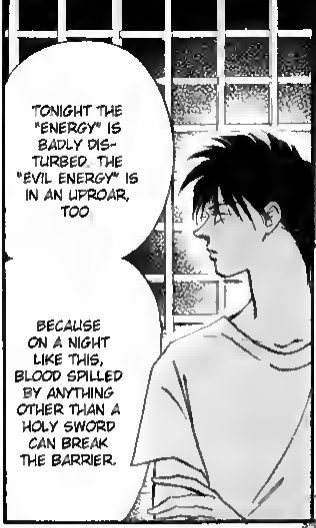

"NEXT TIME I'LL BEAT YOU!"
"I'LL RUIN YOU AND WIPE YOU OUT TO THE LAST MAN!"
HAPPENED TO [illegible] SUPERNATURAL POWER.
THE MOMENT HE DIED HE SPEWED OUT ALL THE [illegible] WITHIN HIM.
ENOUGH TO COVER [illegible] OF IZUMO WITH HIS WILL.
BUT ANYWAY IT SURE MADE THINGS EASIER FOR THE DYNASTY IF THEY GOT RID OF THAT "HEAD"
THAT'S WHY THEY SET OTHER TRIBES AGAINST THEM.
BUT THAT SUSANOO
FROM THEN ON HE REIGNED OVER ALL THE IZUMO TRIBES AND EXPANDED HIS POWER.
BY MAKING USE OF THE FISHER TRIBE'S TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW ABOUT IRON AND THE IZUMO IRON, THEY PRODUCED EVEN STRONGER SWORDS.
THAT CAUGHT THE EYE OF THE YAMATO DYNASTY.
IN ANCIENT IZUMO THERE WAS A NEVER-ENDING WAR OVER HIGH-QUALITY IRON SAND.
THEY SAY THE YAMATA NO OROCHI YOU HEAR ABOUT IN MYTHS WAS A FISHER TRIBE FROM THE SOUTH THAT CAME TO PLUNDER THE LAND.
IT WAS THE [illegible] OF CERTAIN TRIBE [illegible] DEFEATED THEM.
SUSANOO IS A NAME THAT'S GIVEN TO HEROES IN IZUMO THAT'S WHY I DON'T THINK THAT THE LEADER WHO NEVER LOST A REAL CONFLICT WAS THE SAME PERSON AS THE FIRST SUSANOO.
*Note: Several predictions were made that the world would end in 1999
THAT'S NOT FUNNY!
IT'S NEARING 1999, TOO.*
That's a bad omen.
WHY WOULD IT WANT A WAR LIKE THAT?
IT'LL CROSS BORDERS AND THE SEA. .
THAT HUGE AMOUNT OF HATRED WILL BE UNLEASHED ALL AT ONCE
THE QUARRELS WILL BE ANYTHING BUT MINOR
AND WORM ITS WAY INTO PEOPLES' HEARTS
SINCE THE "EVIL ENERGY" IS CONTROLLED BY THE CURSE WHICH LIES OVER THIS COUNTRY...
IT'S MANIPULATED BY SUSANOO'S DESIRE TO FIGHT AND DESTROY
THERE WILL BE A WAR.
WAR?
HERE IN JAPAN AGAIN?!

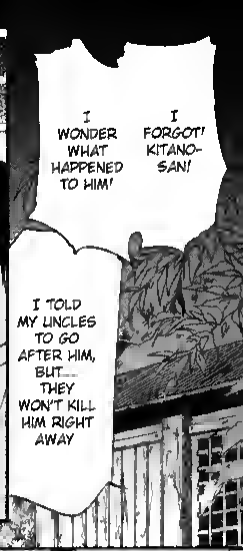

I. . I GET WHY HE'D FEEL THAT,
BUT THAT'S REALLY A PAIN
ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS THE DEEP-SEATED GRUDGE
I DON'T THINK EVEN SUSANOO HIMSELF EVER IMAGINED THAT THINGS WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THIS AFTER 2000 YEARS.

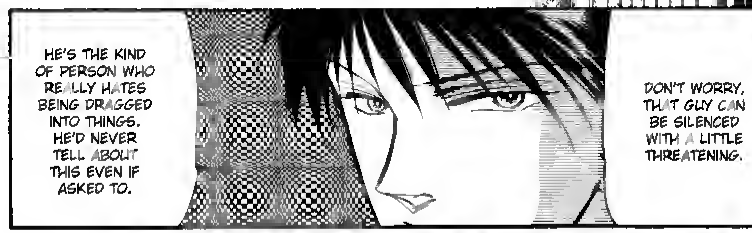
KU, KU-RAKI-KLIN
BUT IT'S MY FATHER'S WILL,
SO I'LL FULFILL IT.
THAT'S THE ONLY BOND THAT BINDS ME
THIS WORLD IS FULL OF HA-TRED ANY-WAY
WHE-THER A WAR BREAKS OUT OR NOT. .
TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, I DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS WORLD
AND YOU'RE GOING . . .
TO PRE-VENT THAT?!
I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL MAKE IT IN TIME

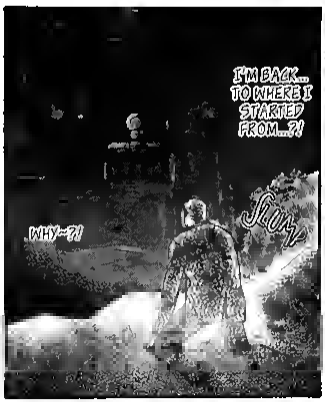
...
FUZUCHI-SAN...
KNEW KURAKI-KUN VERY WELL, I SUPPOSE
TO HOLD HIS SON ON THE RIGHT PATH WAS TO DIE.
HE KNEW THAT THE ONLY WAY...
IF THIS BOND BREAKS
KURAKI-KUN WOULD BE IN DANGER OF GOING ASTRAY
KITANO-SAN..
WOULD CALL SOMEONE LIKE HIM...
A TIME-BOMB
AH!

I'M GOING TO TRY TO CONVINCE KITANO-SAN TO KEEP QUIET, THEN! SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO ..
I SEE


TONIGHT THE "ENERGY" IS BADLY DISTURBED. THE "EVIL ENERGY" IS IN AN UPROAR, TOO
BECAUSE ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS, BLOOD SPILLED BY ANYTHING OTHER THAN A HOLY SWORD CAN BREAK THE BARRIER.


I FORGOT! KITANO-SAN!
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!
I TOLD MY UNCLES TO GO AFTER HIM, BUT.... THEY WON'T KILL HIM RIGHT AWAY


HE'S THE KIND OF PERSON WHO REALLY HATES BEING DRAGGED INTO THINGS. HE'D NEVER TELL ABOUT THIS EVEN IF ASKED TO.
DON'T WORRY. THAT GUY CAN BE SILENCED WITH A LITTLE THREATENING.


I'M BACK... TO WHERE I STARTED FROM...?!
SLUMP
WHY--?!

RUSTLE
WHAT?!

DAMN...! WHY DO I HAVE TO GO THROUGH SOMETHING LIKE THIS...?
huff
huff
huff
huff
I HAVE TO...GET BACK TO THE CAR, NO MATTER WHAT...
RUSTLE

HARUKO!
WOAH!
SLASH
CA... CALM DOWN THERE'S NOBODY HERE ANYMORE. IF... IF I THINK ABOUT IT, THIS IS A GOOD THING...
WHERE
WHERE
I.. I JUST CUT HER..
WHAT'S WITH THAT CUTTER?
IS... IS THAT... BLOOD?!
BECAUSE SHE.. SHE WAS SO MEAN. THA... THAT GIRL DOESN'T THINK ABOUT YOU AT ALL.
THANK GOD! HOW ABOUT THE OTHERS...?
DID YOU COME LOOKING FOR ME?!
THE OTH...
I DID IT FOR YOU...
I...
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?!
THA... THAT'S NOT FUNNY.
WHA...

YOU PLAYED MY WIFE AND DROVE ME TO THIS POINT. .
BUT YOU OVERDID IT, TOO.
I NEVER WANTED TO MAKE THE TROUPE THAT BIG!
YOU. . YOU SEE, SURE, YOU HELPED ME!
STOP IT! DON'T PUT THE BLAME ON ME!
AND AFTER... I... DID SO MUCH FOR YOU!
DIDN'T YOU ASK ME... TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR DREAM. . ?
AH . NO, I MEAN
HAH!
WHY ARE YOU SAYING THIS... NOW. . ?
CA... CALM DOWN. I SAID TOO MUCH TOO...
HA... HARU-KO,
I... ALREADY TOLD EV-ERYBODY...
SINCE I TOLD MY FRIENDS... AND EVEN MY PAR-ENTS, THAT WE'D MARRY SOON...
MY SAV-INGS... ARE GONE, TOO.
WAH!
IT DOESN'T MATTER!
FWHOO

SPLAT
AAH!
AH!
crack
SFX CRASH
CRAK
CRAK
HUH...?

KURAKI-KUN?!
WHA... WHAT'S THE MATT...
WHOOSH
AH!
THE BARRIER ...
WAS JUST BROKEN ...!
WHAT?!

THE "EVIL ENERGY" IS POURING OUT!!
SO...
THE . THERE'S GOING TO BE A WAR NOW?!

NOT YET!
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN . ON THE DAY OF MY FATHER'S DEATH!
I'LL TRY TO PUT UP A NEW BARRIER!

WHAT THE...!
KURAKI-KUN!
STAY HERE, HE SAID...?!

SH
DO
YOU STAY HERE!
SNATCH

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN STAY HERE IDLY!
WOOSH
I THOUGHT THE RAIN HAD TURNED INTO DRIZZLE, BUT NOW IT'S STORMY?
KURA-KI-KUN!
CRAP, WITHOUT GLASSES I'M REALLY HANDI-CAPPED!!
STUMBLE
WAH!
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?
OW, OW...
AH!
GRAND-FATHER'S KEEP-SAKE...
IF THIS IS HERE, THAT MEANS THAT THE PROHIB-ITED ZONE...
IS OVER THERE...
THAT'S RIGHT...!!
I'M SURE IT'S OVER THERE...!

I TOLD YOU NOT TO COME. DIDN'T I?
HUH...?!
I WONDER WHY I KNOW THAT...!
rustle
KURA...
BU... BUT THERE WERE MORE TREES... IT WAS DENSE WOODS.
THERE WAS SOMETHING LIKE A SMALL HILL OVER THERE, AND IN FRONT OF IT THERE WAS A SMALL SHRINE...
IS THE PROHIBITED ZONE... RIGHT...?!
THIS...
SSHH
YEAH.
THE SURGING "EVIL ENERGY" MUST HAVE SWALLOWED IT
OR TO BE MORE PRECISE, IT ABSORBED IT.

KITANO-SAN..?!
SHIGA-MATSU-SAN AS WELL... WHY...?!
I GUESS THEY'RE THE CAUSE. OF ALL PLACES IN THE WORLD, THEY SPILLED BLOOD IN THE PROHIBITED ZONE
WHOOSH
NA-NACHI, CAN YOU SEE IT?
THERE ARE SPIRITS WRITH-ING OVER THERE THAT HAVEN'T ASSIMILATED YET.
HUH?
LOOK AT THEM THEY'LL DISAPPEAR SOON.

IT LOOKS LIKE BLACK MAGMA
LOOK--!!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO GRIEVE OVER WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENED
BUT ...!!
KITANO-SAN!!
CA... CAN'T WE SAVE THEM?!
THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE. THEIR BODIES ARE AL-READY BEING AB-SORBED

DO YOU REMEMBER IT?
THE SUSANOO POEM THAT STARTS WITH "EIGHT CLOUDS RISE UP"?
HUH ..?
ACTUALLY, THAT ISN'T A POEM OF JOY.
IT'S A POEM SUFFUSED WITH THE ANGER OF THE IZUMO TRIBE LED BY SUSA-NOO
THAT POEM SYMBOL-IZED IT ALL!
THIS "MAGMA" IS THE TRUE MEANING OF IT!
I'M SURE THAT SUSA-NOO AND HIS RAGE WERE THE TRIGGER FOR IT,
BUT THE GRUDGE OF THE OP-PRESSED TRIBE PLAYED A PART IN IT, AS WELL.
EIGHT CLOUDS RISE UP IN IZUMO..
AND BUILD AN EIGHT-FOLD FENCE..
TO PROTECT MY BRIDE
SUCH A SPLENDID FENCE
WHOOSH

UNTIL THE DAY WE BRING YOU DOWN...
WE SHALL PUT UP AN EIGHT-FOLD BARRIER THAT WILL NEVER FALL...
IN ORDER TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN, WE'LL DON'T TRUE TO BEAR DESCENDANTS WHO INHERIT OUR WILL.
THOSE OF US THAT AS GROUND FIERCE WILL ONE DAY RISE UP.

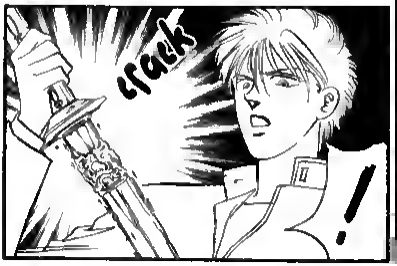
THEY'RE CONFUSED BY THEIR SUDDEN FREEDOM...
...BUT SOON THEY'LL START A DELUGE...!
UH..
KURAKI-KUN?!
IF...
THE "EVIL ENERGY" POSSESSES ME... KILL ME!
HUH?
HEY...
CAN I ASK YOU FOR SOMETHING..?
WHA—WHAT?!
WHA...WHAT?!
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?
THAT I'M AN EVIL SHAMAN...!
SINCE I'M A SHAMAN I CAN TAKE IN ALL OF IT!
I'LL BECOME ITS TOOL REGARDLESS OF MY OWN WILL
IT WANTS A "BODY" TO NEST IN!
IT WANTS ME...

I PROMISED MY FATHER!
THAT'S THE ONE THING I CAN'T DO!
BUT...!
SHOULDN'T THAT BE OUR LAST RESORT?!
AFTER I'M BEEN POSSESSED EVEN YOU'LL BE ABLE TO KILL ME EASILY!
IT'S TOO DIES. IT'LL ALL DISAPPEAR!
I CAN'T DO IT EITHER.
I CAN'T KILL YOU!
THAT'S RIGHT!
I... CAN'T...
N... NO...
MY HEART IS HERE!
USE "KAGUTSUCHI"! GOT IT!
I'M NOT SURE IF I CAN PUT A SEAL UPON IT TO TEMPORARILY SUPPRESS IT WITH "KAGUTSUCHI" ALONE!

I... CAN'T DO IT!
NANACHI!
I CAN'T DO... SOME-THING LIKE THAT!
SSHHINK
!
IT'S CALLING OUT...?!
DON'T TELL ME... THERE'S A HOLY SWORD NEARBY?!
NA-NACHI!
THAT'S IT!
HUH ...?
THIS IS A KEEP-SAKE OF MY GRAND-FATHER ...

IT'S BEEN CLOSE ALL ALONG AND NOTHING HAPPENED
BU.. BUT .

THE SEVEN HOLY SWORDS ARE SIBLINGS THAT WERE MADE OF THE SAME IRON BY THE SAME SWORD SMITH.
WHEN THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY, THEY CALL OUT TO EACH OTHER!


CLACK
!

THERE'S ANOTHER SCABBARD UNDER IT!

THIS IS.
CRUMBLE
CRUMBLE

"MIZUCHI"!!
KURAKI-KUN, IT'S COMING!
WOAH!
STAND BACK!!

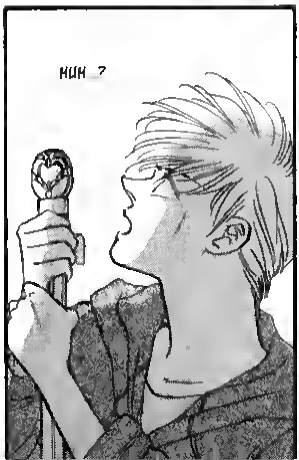
WAH!
crackle
crackle
NANA-CHI!
COME HERE!
HAH!

SFX WHACK

KU... KURAKI-KUN
clash
DON'T LET GO, NO MATTER WHAT HAP-PENS!
REAL TIGHT!
HOLD ON TO "KAGU-TSUCHI!"

HSGU
THE BLACK SHADOWS... ARE KEEPING AWAY FROM KURAKI-KUN!
IS THAT BECAUSE OF GRANDFATHER'S SWORD?!
"ENERGY"...!

ZING
"OH GREAT ENERGY ...!!"
ZING

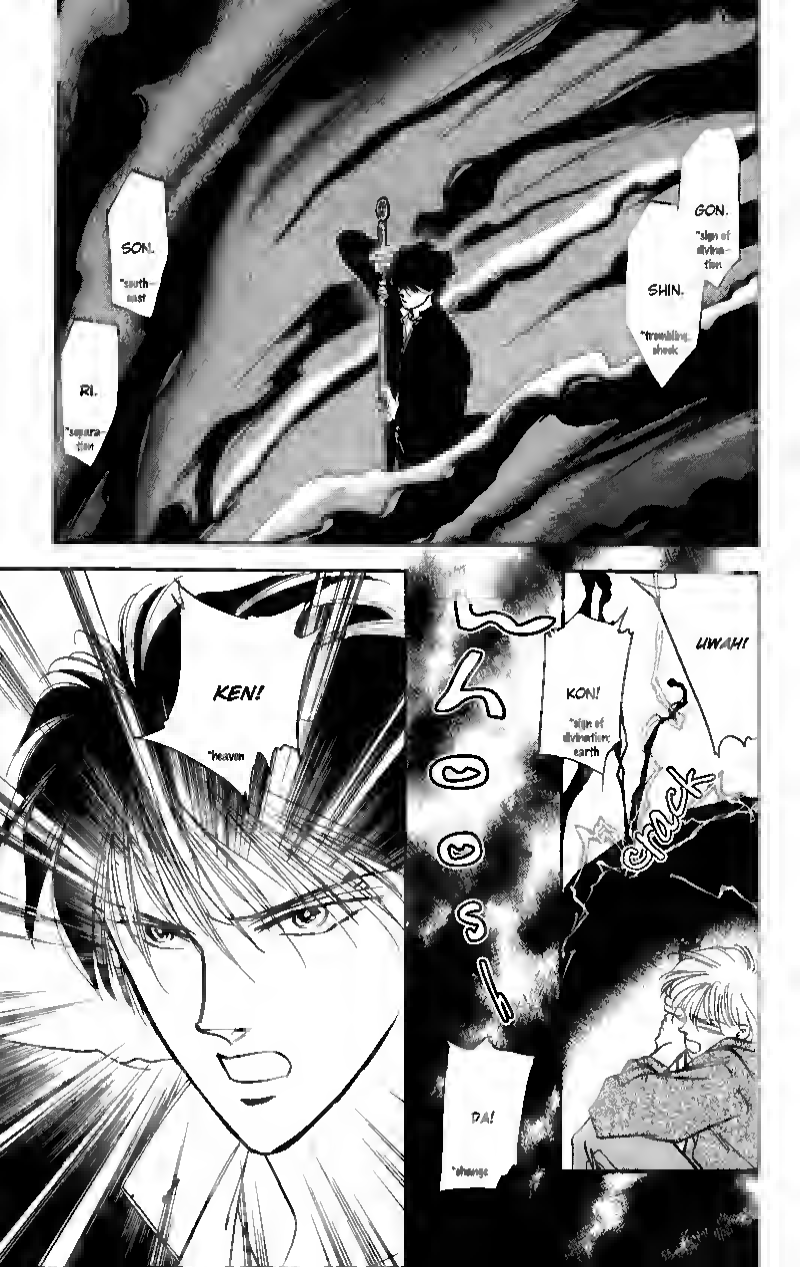

HUH ?

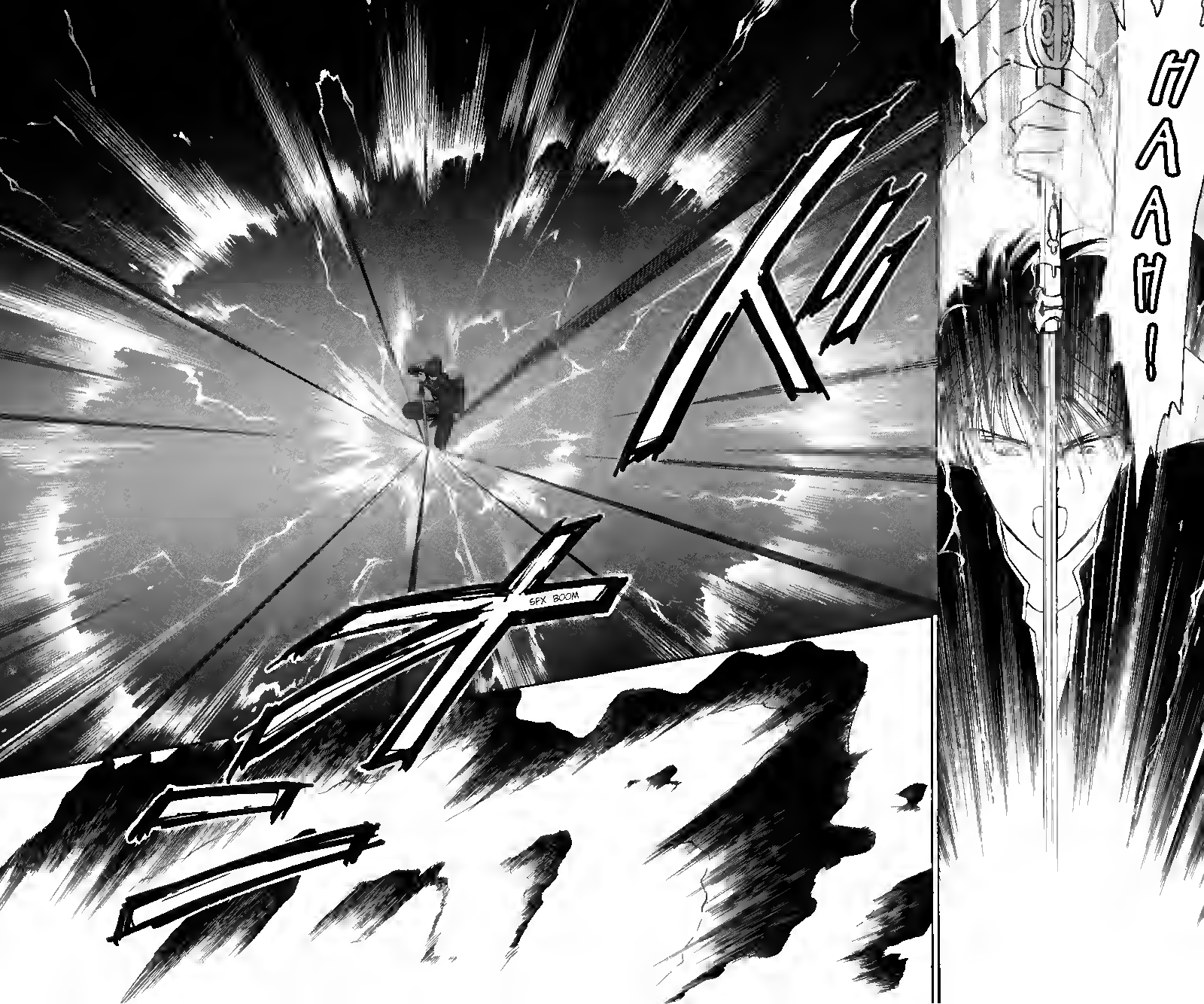
ZING

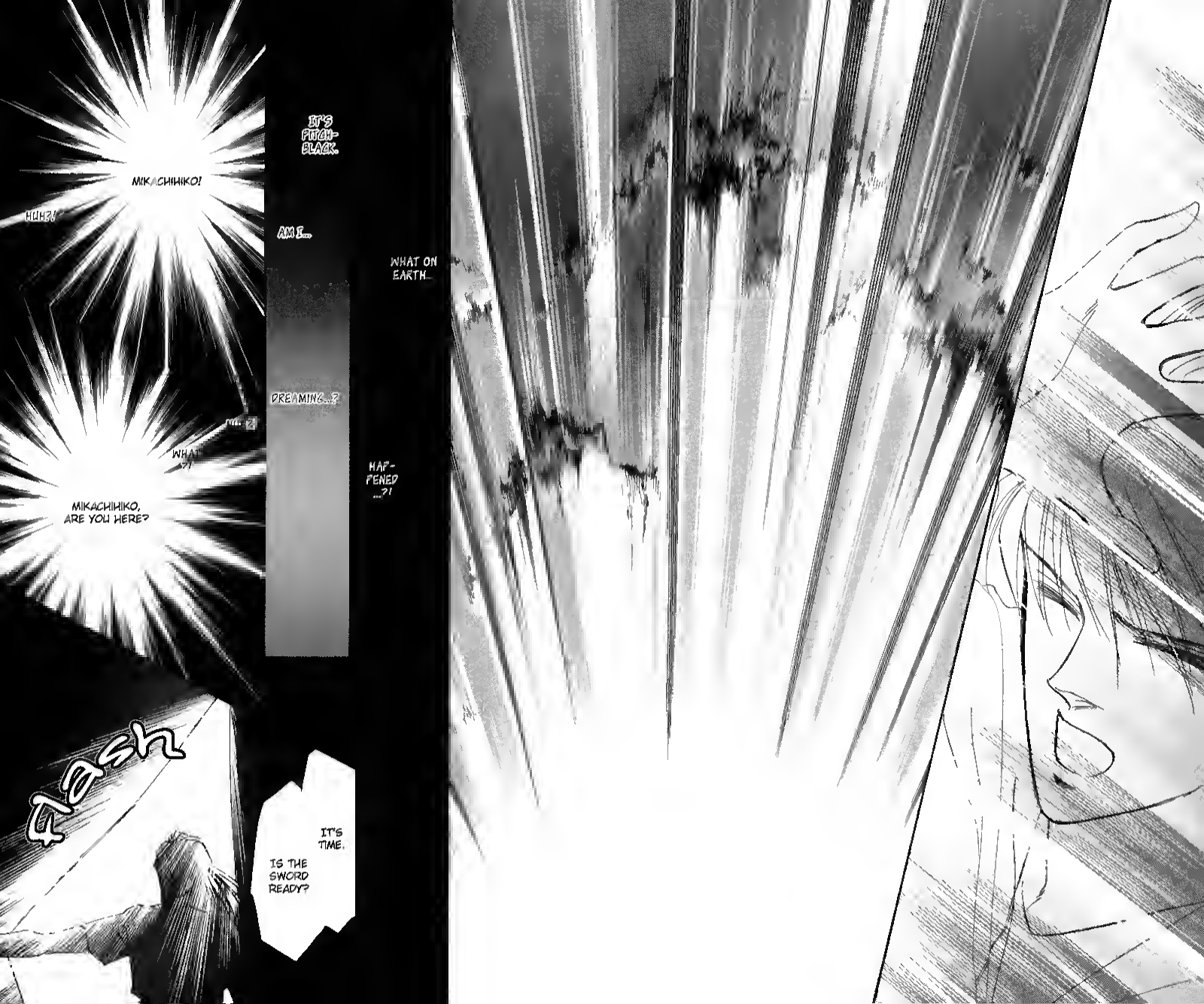
SSHH
UH!
ANSWER ME!
APPROACH ME AND LEND ME YOUR POWER!

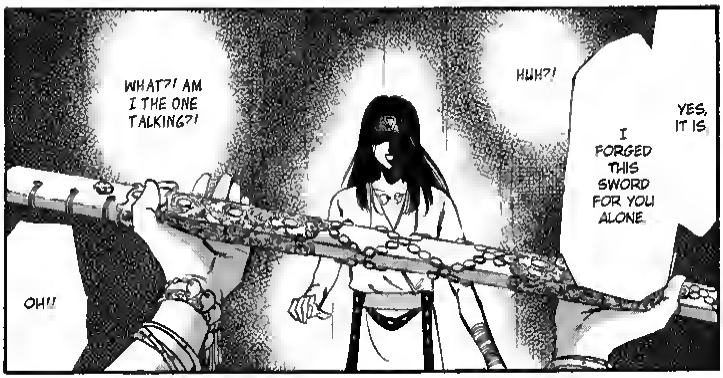
LIGHT ....!!
AH....!!
FACE ....!
KURAKI-KUN'S...

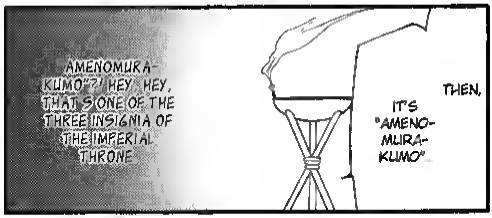
NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE, GENDERLESS.
HIS FACE
IS DIFFERENT!
THAT'S RIGHT!
THIS IS THE FACE FROM WHEN HE WAS THE SHRINE MAIDEN—!
THIS IS
"POSSESSION"!
KAN!
"hole, aperture"


GON.
"sign of divination"
SHIN.
"trembling shock"
SON.
"south-east"
RI.
"separation"
KEN!
"heaven"
KON!
"sign of divination: earth"
UWAH!
crack
DA!
"change"


HAAH!
SFX BOOM


IT'S PITCH-BLACK.
MIKACHIHIKO!
HUH?!
AM I...
WHAT ON EARTH...
DREAMING...?
WHAT...?!
HAP-PENED ...?!
MIKACHIHIKO, ARE YOU HERE?
Dash
IT'S TIME.
IS THE SWORD READY?

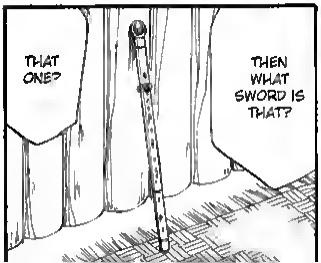

WHAT?! AM I THE ONE TALKING?!
HUH?!
YES, IT IS.
I FORGED THIS SWORD FOR YOU ALONE.
OH!!

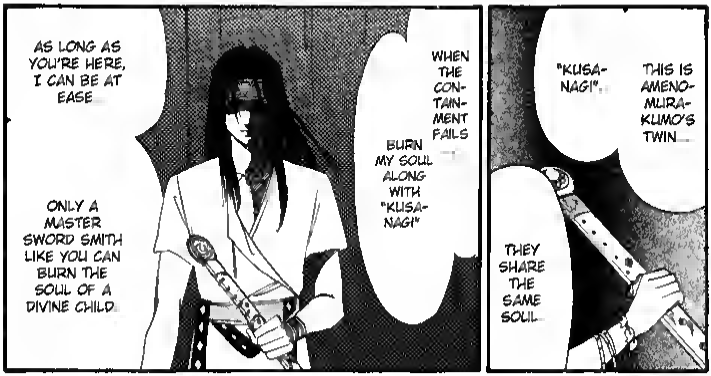

AMENOMURA-KUMO"?! HEY, HEY, THAT'S ONE OF THE THREE INSIGNIA OF THE IMPERIAL THRONE
THEN,
IT'S "AMENO-MURA-KUMO".

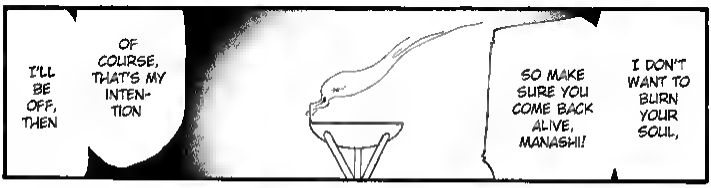
NAME IT FOR ME, MIKACHI-HIKO!
IT'S GOR-GEOUS ...!!
SO MIKACHI-SOMETHING IS MY NAME?!
LET'S SEE

WITH THIS SWORD, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEAL THE "EVIL ENERGY" WITHOUT A DOUBT
THIS IS THE ONLY SWORD WORTHY TO BE "AMENO-MURA-KUMO"
HUH?
THAT DULL BLADE CON-TAINS NO SOUL

ISN'T THAT THE NAME OF THE SWORD PRESENTED TO THE YAMATOS?
THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S A NATIONAL TREA-SURE.


THAT ONE?
THEN WHAT SWORD IS THAT?


AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE, I CAN BE AT EASE...
ONLY A MASTER SWORD SMITH LIKE YOU CAN BURN THE SOUL OF A DIVINE CHILD...
WHEN THE CONTAINMENT FAILS...
BURN MY SOUL ALONG WITH "KUSANAGI"
"KUSANAGI"...
THIS IS AMENOMURAKUMO'S TWIN...
THEY SHARE THE SAME SOUL...


I'LL BE OFF, THEN
OF COURSE, THAT'S MY INTENTION
SO MAKE SURE YOU COME BACK ALIVE, MANASHI!
I DON'T WANT TO BURN YOUR SOUL,

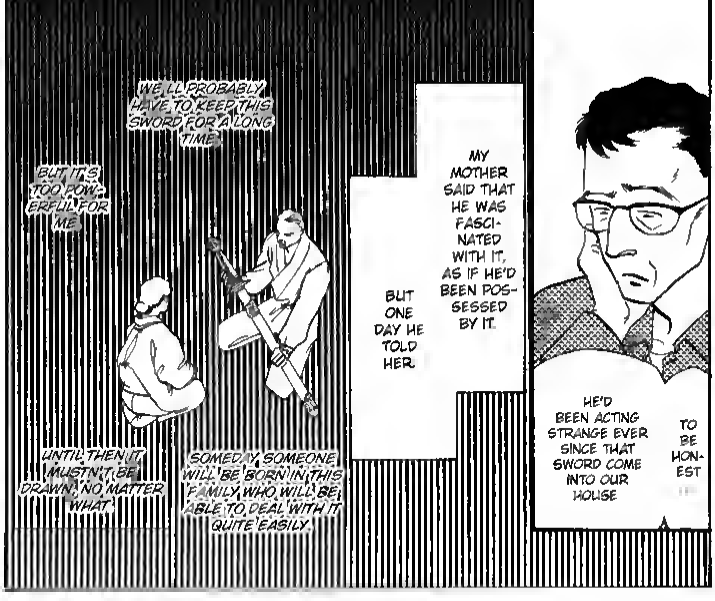
FLASH
MANASHI!
BELIEVE IN ME!
MY BROTHER.

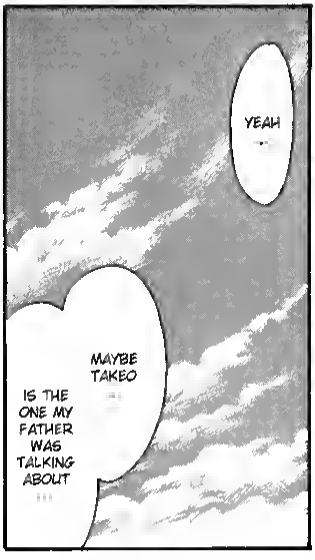
KURA-KI-KUN!!
NA-NACHI-SAN!
AH..
A DREAM...?
THANK GOD! NANACHI-SAN, YOU WERE ASLEEP FOR TWO DAYS
THE DOCTOR SAID YOU ALMOST CAME DOWN WITH PNEUMONIA.
WHERE IS KURAKI-KUN?
HE JUST... WENT TO THE POLICE, ALONG WITH EMA-SAN AND CHIKA-SAN.
POLICE?
BECAUSE OF KITANO-SAN'S AND SHIGEMATSU-SAN'S DISAP-PEARANCE.
OH— YEAH
THAT'S RIGHT

KITANO-SAN AND SHIGEMATSU-SAN ARE INSIDE OF THAT BLACK MAGMA FOR-EVER, UNTIL THEY ASSUME A SOLID FORM—
THIS IS REAL
WHO WOULD BELIEVE IT, HUH?

NA-NACHI-SAN, ARE YOU IN PAIN?!
NO— I'M FINE
DON'T WORRY
I'M JUST A LITTLE DIZZY—
OH, I SEE HE STILL HAS A FEVER
Namachi
I'M REALLY SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU
DEAR, WAS THAT TAKEO?

APPARENTLY THAT SWORD IS AN AUTHENTIC, ANCIENT PIECE
HE ASKED ME IF I COULD TELL HIM HOW WE CAME ACROSS IT
I TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE
AND THEN?
OH MY!
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH TAKEO?!
BUT YOU WEREN'T ON THE PHONE THAT LONG JUST BECAUSE OF THAT, WERE YOU?
NO
DID HE BREAK DOWN BECAUSE HIS SENPAI DISAPPEARED?
HE SAID TAKEO'S STILL BEDRIDDEN
IT WAS THE SON OF THE FAMILY WHO PUT HIM UP
WHAT A PITY.
THEY SAY THAT THE THEATRICAL TROUPE WAS ALMOST BANKRUPT, DON'T THEY?
WHY?
BECAUSE HE FORCED HER TO TAKE THAT SWORD WITH HER
IT'S JUST AS IF MY FATHER HAD KNOWN THAT THERE'D BE AN AIR RAID
MY MOTHER HAD COME TO THE SAFE-HOUSE TO VISIT ME ON THAT DAY. THAT SAVED HER, BUT...
MY FATHER PASSED AWAY ON THE SAME DAY.
IT'S CREEPY.
SO IT BELONGED TO SOMEONE ELSE!
MY MOTHER ONCE TOLD ME THAT THEY'D BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH IT BY A SWORD DEALER WHO REGULARLY CAME TO OUR HOUSE
BUT THAT FAMILY WAS WIPED OUT DURING THAT AIR RAID, TOO.


WE'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO KEEP THIS SWORD FOR A LONG TIME.
BUT IT'S TOO POWERFUL FOR ME.
UNTIL THEN IT MUST NOT BE DRAWN, NO MATTER WHAT.
SOMEDAY, SOMEONE WILL BE BORN IN THIS FAMILY, WHO WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH IT QUITE EASILY.
BUT ONE DAY HE TOLD HER
MY MOTHER SAID THAT HE WAS FASCINATED WITH IT, AS IF HE'D BEEN POSSESSED BY IT.
HE'D BEEN ACTING STRANGE EVER SINCE THAT SWORD COME INTO OUR HOUSE
TO BE HONEST


YEAH...
MAYBE TAKEO IS THE ONE MY FATHER WAS TALKING ABOUT...

ACTUALLY, I WAS HOPELESS WHEN IT CAME TO THAT SWORD.
WHEN I WAS NEAR IT, IT GAVE ME THE CREEPS
I DARE SAY
OH MY!
HOW SCARY

HE ONLY COMPLAINED ABOUT HOW HEAVY IT WAS.
TAKEO DIDN'T MIND HOLDING IT.
BUT...

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. HOW COULD THEY ELOPE...?
HE WOULD YIELD TO SHIGEMATSU-SAN IF SHE PRESSURED HIM INTO DOING IT.
THAT'S BECAUSE HE WAS WEAK-HEARTED, I GUESS.
I WONDER IF NANACHI IS ALL RIGHT.
YASUKO IS TENDING TO HIM.
AND EVEN AFTER SOMETHING SO HORRIBLE HAPPENED IN YOUR FAMILY, TOO. SORRY, MAN.
WITH YOUR FATHER SO SUDDENLY.
MY FATHER TOLD US THAT HE HAD CANCER,
SO WE WERE PREPARED FOR IT.
I SEE... WELL, KEEP YOUR CHIN UP!
BY THE WAY, I HEARD YOU'RE MOVING TO TOKYO?
YEAH.
I'VE SUCCEEDED MY FATHER AS THE FIFTEENTH HEAD, BUT I'M STILL INEXPERIENCED,
SO I'M GOING TO TRAIN AT MY UNCLE'S DOJO
GOOD LUCK! NANACHI AND I WILL HELP YOU, TOO.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
HEY!
I'M THERE, TOO.

AH, BUT WHAT GREAT WEATHER
IT'S AS IF THOSE TWO STORMY DAYS NEVER EXISTED
THAT'S TRUE IT'S ALMOST HOT
THAT CLOUD LOOKS LIKE A CLOUD IN MID-SUMMER, DON'T YOU THINK?
IT'S KIND OF AMAZ-ING
CHIRP
CHIRP

Yakumo Tatsu - End